

# THE HOLY SPIRIT

## A STUDY

WILSON T. HOGUE





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*Yours sincerely,  
Hilari D. Hogue.*



# THE HOLY SPIRIT

## A STUDY

By

BISHOP WILSON T. HOGUE, PH. D.

*"One accent of the Holy Ghost  
The heedless world has never lost"*

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
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TO  
ALL HUMBLE AND DEVOUT STUDENTS  
OF "THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD"  
THIS VOLUME  
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED  
BY THE AUTHOR







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## PREFACE

The subject of this volume is one that has burned in the author's heart for more than thirty years. It engaged pretty much all his spare time for Bible study from 1884 to 1890 in connection with the duties of a pastoral charge. Most of the contents were written at that time. It was not then definitely intended to produce a book on the subject, although the possibility of doing so was occasionally in mind. The book might have appeared much earlier but for the frank and friendly advice of an older brother minister. At a conference in Galt, Ontario, where the author and the older minister were entertained together, a disclosure was made to the brother minister of what had been done in the way of study and writing on the subject, with the suggestion that what had been written might some day be published in permanent form. He replied in substance as follows: "Now, let me give you some advice. You had better let that matter rest for ten years; as then your thought and judgment will be more mature."

So far as the matter of making a book on the subject was concerned the brother's advice was followed, although the subject was still much in mind, and continued to burn hotly in the author's heart. The matter was allowed to rest not only for one decade, but another, and another, until more than thirty years had passed before the book was finally decided upon.



During these protracted delays the manuscript was occasionally reviewed and revised, and the subject was one of much thought and study, the results of which have been incorporated in the book as it now appears.

The rich spiritual benefit received by the author from his research and meditation on the subject, as also his having found the study an invaluable key to nearly the whole Bible, together with the fact that there are few volumes to be found broadly treating the general subject of The Holy Spirit, have been his most cogent reasons for the production of this volume. Much less attention has been given to the Holy Spirit and His work by religious and theological writers generally than the subject has merited; and most of those who have written on the subject have confined themselves to certain phases of it, rather than attempting to discuss it in a more general way. Of course, one could not discuss *every* phase of truth respecting the Holy Spirit presented in the Scriptures without either confining himself to scrappy comments, or else producing so bulky a volume as to be impractical for common use. Not wishing to go to either of these extremes, and yet desiring to set forth all the more important scriptural phases of the subject, has led to the production of the present work.

The aim has been to adapt the volume to popular needs, and therefore metaphysical and philosophical discussion has been avoided, as too abstruse for the common reader, and a direct and simple style has generally been employed, as also an expository method, both being more in keeping with the author's



purpose. The method advised by the prophet Habakkuk (2:2) has been quite scrupulously adhered to: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it."

Chapters II-V were published more than twenty years ago in the *Free Methodist*, and with some revision are herein republished from that periodical. Also the chapters on "The Holy Spirit and His Gifts" appeared at nearly the same time in the *Bible Banner*, and, with some abridgment and much revision, have been reproduced from that magazine. The chapter on "The Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit" is the substance of a sermon preached a number of times years ago by the author, and more recently adapted to this volume.

Credits have usually been given for borrowed matter in the body of the work. Accordingly no acknowledgments need to be made here, except it be to say that the works which have influenced the author most in the production of this volume are: "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," by the Rev. Dr. John Owen, a seventeenth century Puritan divine; "The Mission of the Comforter," by Arch-deacon J. C. Hare of England, the third edition of which appeared in 1846; "The Work of the Holy Spirit," by Professor James S. Candlish, of Free Church College, Glasgow, Scotland; "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," by the Rev. J. B. Walker, D. D., an American writer of note on the philosophy of experimental salvation; "The Offices of the Holy Spirit," by Dougan Clark, M. D., of Worcester, England; "The Paraclete, an Essay on the Personality and Ministry of the Holy Ghost with Some Reference to Current Discussions," by the Rev.



Joseph Parker, D. D., of London, England; "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost," by the Rev. Asa Mahan, D. D.; and a valuable little work entitled, "Spirit and Life," by the late Amory H. Bradford, D. D., pastor of the First Congregational Church, Montclair, New Jersey.

The author also wishes to make acknowledgment of the highly valuable service rendered by his personal friend, Professor David S. Warner, in preparing the Indexes to the contents of this volume. His work has been admirably done, and adds much to the value of the book.

It is the author's supreme desire that, so far as they shall be approved of heaven, the teachings of this book may be translated into the actual experience of the reader, and may become sources of inspiration, strength, courage, and effectiveness in the service of our glorious Redeemer. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

WILSON T. HOGUE.

*Michigan City, Indiana.*



## THE HOLY SPIRIT







# I

## IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

The importance of giving careful attention to the nature and work of the Holy Spirit as presented in the Christian Scriptures can scarcely be over-estimated. The manifestation of the Spirit is the completion of that theological revelation which has been vouchsafed to mankind for their salvation. It is last in the order of time, but by no means last or least in importance. In this case that which is last in the successive revelations becomes foremost in importance.

## A PHILOSOPHICAL DISTINCTION

The succession indicated by the words Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is by no means an arbitrary one. Nor is it merely nominal or accidental. The terms are indicative of "a philosophical progress and culmination." They are not used like algebraic symbols, which would be equally appropriate if they were inverted, or if other terms were substituted for them. Any transposition of the order in which the words Father, Son, and Holy Ghost occur, would necessarily be felt to be violent, unnatural, destructive of their proper meaning, resulting in a meaningless agglomeration of words.



In endeavoring to think ourselves back toward "the beginning" of the things that are, whatever we come upon as a resting place for the mere critical faculty, be it Force, Energy, the Unknowable, or what not, we are conscious of nought but keenest disappointment—conscious of the need of a friendship, fellowship, kinship, sympathy, and helpfulness which are not merely cosmic in character, but which are adapted to alleviating our sorrows, soothing our heart-aches, and satisfying the deep yearnings of the heart for love and all its kindred graces. "Then is suggested the biblical word *Father*, and with it comes at least a promise of satisfaction; it is *felt* to be the true starting-point, having difficulties of its own, no doubt, but difficulties that may be overcome. The Fatherhood is not emotional, but causative and sovereign paternity. Logic can do but little towards its explanation; the mind must accept this idea of Fatherhood as the mind accepts itself, a mystery certainly, but not greater except in degree than the silent, invisible, spiritual *life* that is in every man."\*

But the term Fatherhood includes the idea of Sonship. It has a plural implication. It is an inclusive term. It is at once suggestive of childhood, and this idea of childhood is realized in the Sonship of Jesus Christ. He was the Son of God in visible manifestation; but when He had been manifested on the stage of human history sufficiently to establish His place and identity among men, His presence was withdrawn from ocular gaze and criticism, that men's faith in Him should be raised from the visible to the

\*Dr. Joseph Parker's "The Paraclete," p. 10.



invisible Christ, that they might know Him "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

It was fitting, in view of His exalted nature as Son of God, that as soon as His identity was established and His bodily mission among men was fulfilled, He should "vanish out of their sight." He came to reveal God, who is a Spirit, and to teach men to "worship Him in Spirit and in truth;" and when He had revealed the Father and taught the necessity of spiritual worship, His earthly mission was accomplished; and to have remained longer among men in material form would have been to defeat the end He had in view—that of making men *spiritual* worshipers. The presence of the corporeal, visible Christ was withdrawn, that the invisible, abiding Presence might be vouchsafed to men. "Then, according to Christian teaching, was to come manifestation without visibility; instead of bodily presence, there was to be a new experience of life, spirituality, insight, sensibility, and sympathy almost infallible in holy instinct. In one word, the Holy *Man* was to be followed by the Holy *Ghost*."\*

Moreover, the whole historic movement, as Dr. Parker has admirably shown, has been a movement toward spirituality. The progress of creation, the system of redemption, the order of written testimony, the development of the whole law, all are movements in the same direction, approaching more and more nearly to that which is purely spiritual, until at last in the order of the Gospel economy, the pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurs as the climax



of the whole progression, and the dispensation of spiritual religion is fully ushered in.

Says the eminent Dean Stanley, referring to the dispensation of the Spirit as succeeding the dispensations of the Father and of the Son:

There is yet a third manifestation of God. *Natural* religion may become vague and abstract. *Historical* religion may become, as it often has become, perverted, distorted, exhausted, formalized; and its external proofs may become dubious, its inner meaning may be almost lost. There have been oftentimes Christians who were not like Christ—a Christianity which was not the religion of Christ. But there is yet another aspect of the Divine Nature. Besides the reverence for that which is above us, and the reverence for that which is beneath us, there is also the reverence for that which is within us. There is yet (if we may venture to vary Goethe's parable) another form of religion, and that is *spiritual* religion. As the name of the Father represents to us God in Nature, as the name of the Son represents to us God in History, so the name of the Holy Ghost represents to us God in our own hearts, and spirits, and consciences. This is the still, small voice— stillest and smallest, yet loudest and strongest of all—which, even more than the wonders of nature or the wonders of history, brings us into nearest harmony with Him who is a Spirit—who, when His closest communion with man is described, can only be described as the Spirit pleading with, and dwelling in our spirit.\*

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT FUNDAMENTAL

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is fundamental in Christianity. This is evident from the fact that Christianity is a *life*. That which is the chief essential of Christianity is not a creed, not a philosophy, not conformity to a prescribed ritual, not a certain

\*"Christian Institutions," p. 251.



round of duties in the form of good works; for one may be faultless in all these respects and yet be as remote from being a real, New Testament Christian as he who pays no attention to any of these things. To be a Christian in the true sense of the word is to be a partaker of the life of Jesus Christ. Without this no man is a Christian, however orthodox his belief, however sound his philosophy, however amiable his natural traits of character, however beneficent his deeds. As Dr. Amory H. Bradford aptly says, "A man is a Platonist who accepts the philosophy of Plato, and a Kantian who accepts the philosophy of Kant, and a Calvinist who accepts the philosophy of Calvin; but a man may believe all the teachings of Jesus and be a devil. Not belief, but life, makes a man a Christian."\*

But the great question is, "How may we become partakers of that life?" How may we become connected with One who left this world nearly two millenniums ago? Is it possible in any real sense to come into relation with Him? Are not those Scriptures which seem to speak of such relation to be regarded as merely highly wrought figures of speech? Is it not mysticism, enthusiasm, fanaticism, to lay claim to being in living relation with the Son of God? Though we admit the fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and is still a living Christ, enthroned in the highest heaven, there is still somewhat of the same difficulty, for He appears at best to be an absent Christ, so far remote from us that we can not reach Him. How then can He transform me when He is far beyond my reach? How can I be

\*"Spirit and Life," p. 10.



expected to follow a leader whom I can not see or know?

Thus we are brought face to face with the fact of the necessity that the work which the Lord Jesus began while He was among men should be carried on by some one who can authoritatively represent Him. But who shall it be? Certainly not the Pope of Rome, for he is but a man. Nor has any council of the Church, or of the Churches, been invested with authority to speak and act in the name of Christ. Moreover, it may be said with all reverence for the sacredness of the Holy Scriptures that these can never take the place of Jesus Christ in the world. There is but one Agent in the whole universe who can authoritatively speak and act in Jesus Christ's stead—"the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost." Regarding Him Jesus said, "If I depart, I will send Him unto you." "And He shall abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world can not receive, because it knoweth Him not; \* \* \* but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." "When He is come He shall reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." "He shall teach you all things." "He shall guide you into all truth." "He shall testify of Me." "He shall glorify Me." "He shall show you things to come." "He shall receive of the things of Mine, and shall show them unto you." "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

As Jesus Christ was God in human relations, continuing a work for the salvation of men, so the Holy Spirit is God carrying on that work, not far away but nearer to men than Jesus Christ Himself ever was, as spirit can get nearer to



spirit than body to spirit. How near can spirit get to spirit? My friend's body may be in China; my friend's spirit is in my spirit, so that I think his thoughts and do his wishes. My friend's body is in the ground mingling with the common earth, but he himself is here, more intensely alive than ever, so that I live to carry out his purposes. Paul said, "Christ liveth in me." That was literally true. God, not far away and unloving, but as near as spirit can get to spirit; God, not leaving us to a Book that He has inspired, but coming nearer than any book can come, and helping us to understand that Book; God, not asking us to cry so that our voices can pierce the spaces, but telling us that He is nigh us, even in our hearts—this is the teaching of Christianity concerning the Holy Spirit.\*

#### THE PRIMARY OBJECT OF SATANIC ASSAULT

The Holy Spirit being thus fundamental to Christianity it is nothing strange that Satan should have set himself from earliest times to the task of blinding or deceiving men as to the nature and operations of this Divine Agent, thereby endeavoring to hold men in the blindness of unbelief, and in the bondage of iniquity, by essentially concealing from them the object of saving faith, and setting aside the quickening, transforming, sanctifying power of the Gospel. Through more than eighteen centuries it has been the artful and effectual device of the devil to rob men of the great characteristic promise of the New Testament dispensation; a promise which was distinctly and impressively given by our Lord in the final and most memorable hour of His earthly ministry—that *the Holy Spirit should descend upon the Church after the Redeemer's ascension, and should come to*

\*Bradford's "Spirit and Life," p. 20.



*abide with all true believers forever, as their indwelling Comforter, Teacher, Guide, and Sanctifier.*

As already intimated there have been three great epochs or dispensations in the history of redemption, corresponding to and successively manifesting the three Persons of the Godhead. Under each of these dispensations it has fallen within the purpose of Satan to hide from men the character and work of the Divine Person whom that particular economy was designed to manifest, and thereby to obscure the agency by which alone the object of saving faith could be effectually revealed. Under the dispensation of the Father his unceasing effort was directed to the work of blinding men to the true character and to the very existence of God. Hence the constant inclination of God's ancient people to idolatry. Although its foolishness and wickedness were repeatedly demonstrated by methods involving the chosen people in retributions severe and terrible, yet they were ever prone to yield to its infatuation, and, apostatizing from the faith, to "worship and serve the creature more than the Creator."

Under the dispensation of the Son, which reached its culmination when "God was manifested in the flesh," the prince of darkness diligently applied himself to the task of blinding men to the Divine nature and mission of Jesus Christ. "If our Gospel be hid," says St. Paul, "it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:3, 4). It is recorded of the Incarnate Word that "He was in the world,



and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:10, 11). They cried: "Away with Him! Crucify Him!" Accordingly He was put to death on the cross, as an impostor and malefactor. But God "raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:20, 21).

As a result and demonstration of the finished atonement of Christ, when He had ascended up on high, the Holy Ghost was given in His plenitude, and the dispensation of the Spirit was inaugurated. Since that event it has been the masterpiece of satanic device to blind men to the nature and operations of the Holy Ghost, the administrative Agent with whom the whole business pertaining to man's reconciliation with God now has to be transacted.

Accordingly it is not at all uncommon to find great confusion, error and skepticism in regard to the character and office-work of the Holy Spirit. There are many, even among professedly Christian people, who entertain no higher conception of the Spirit of God than that of an impersonal, mysterious, indefinable, but supernatural influence; or, that of a particular emanation, manifestation or attribute of Deity; either of which is a most degrading conception, and one which is an impassable barrier to the attainment of a deep, personal and scriptural experience in the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. With some this is almost an unconscious skepticism;



but with many, in some instances with whole denominations, it assumes the form of a systematic denial of a doctrine, or of doctrines, absolutely essential to Christianity.

There is also a tendency, even among those who are generally considered "orthodox," to underestimate and despise the Holy Spirit and His work.

Not to mention the Socinians [says the venerable Dr. Owen], who have gathered into one head, or rather ulcerous imposthume, all the virulent oppositions made to His Deity or grace by the Photinians, Macedonians and Pelagians of old; there are others, who, professing no enmity to His Divine Person, yea, admitting the doctrine of the Church concerning it, are yet ready, on all occasions, to despise His whole work. \* \* \* And some have taken pains to prove that various things expressly assigned to Him in the Gospel, as effects of His power and grace, are only filthy enthusiasms, or, at least, weak imaginations of distempered minds. Nor is there any end of calumnious imputations on those who avow His work and profess His grace. For let any persons but plead for the known work of the Spirit of God, and they are immediately charged with leaving the rule of the Word to attend to revelations and inspirations, as also to forego all thoughts of the necessity of the duties of obedience; though no work of His is pleaded for but that, without which no man can attend to the rule of Scripture as he ought, nor perform one duty of obedience in a proper manner.\*

#### CONFLICT OF THE FUTURE

The great and decisive conflict to be waged by the Church in the near future, will doubtless be a conflict between faith and unbelief regarding those vital truths which concern the doctrine and ministry of the Holy Ghost. The great aim of a Sadducean creed

\*"Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," p. \*11.



has ever been, and the direct aim of the subtle infidelity of modern times manifestly is, to ignore all spiritual existences and agencies; "to banish God from the world; to deny all miraculous agency and all moral regeneration; to proclaim a cold, dull, dead materialism; and to bind the universe in the chains of fixed, irreversible and inviolable law."

The great battle of Armageddon itself seems to be drawing near. That long-predicted and decisive struggle will probably relate to the reality of spiritual existencies and agencies, rather than to the outward facts and events of Christian history. The existence and operation of a Divine Agency, working out grand spiritual results, and effecting great moral transformations and regenerations will be ignored; "man's personal spirituality will be denied; thought itself will be more emphatically pronounced but a form or expression of matter; and, as a logical necessity, so far as these things are supposed to be proved, Christianity will be regarded as the outcome of a tragical mistake, and the entire theological idea be classed with the nightmares of paganism."

#### IMPORTANCE OF BEING PREPARED

This being the probable character and course of the impending contest to be waged between Christianity and the confederate powers of Antichrist, how important it is that every Christian be thoroughly and fully prepared to withstand the encroachments and assaults of the gross, persistent, blatant and boastful Sadduceeism of the age, and that the Church should be equipped with that spiritual armor



whereby she will be able "to stand against the wiles of the devil," and to overthrow the strongholds of materialistic philosophy and skepticism!

This preparation can be had only by an experimental acquaintance with the Holy Ghost in the peculiar ministration of grace and life ascribed to Him in the Scriptures. The promise, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," etc., holds good in relation to all believers, and to the entire Church, throughout the whole dispensation of the Spirit. And the special supernatural enduement and furnishing therein provided, are alone adequate to gird the Church of God for glorious and final triumph in the struggle now impending!

It is scarcely possible, therefore, we repeat, to overestimate the importance of correct views concerning the nature and office-work of the Holy Spirit. In proportion as we are in error regarding these matters, the greater is our peril—the greater the danger, yea, the *probability*, that we shall be carried away on the current of a popular sentimentalism into the broad waste of gross materialism. If we conceive of the Holy Spirit as a mere attribute, influence, emanation or manifestation of God, we shall necessarily suffer an "eclipse of faith," or, rather, of the object of faith, which is Jesus Christ; since it is the Spirit alone who can disclose the glorified Christ as the object of saving faith. And if Christ be not revealed in us, as "over all, God blessed forevermore," we shall utterly fail of finding such a manifestation of God as will satisfy the demands of the human soul. Without this we shall be left to wander in the labyrinths of error and unbelief; or, perchance, to



betake ourselves to the cold realm of mere natural religion, and there grope vainly about to find Him in the visible creation. The beauties of nature, the glories of the universe, the sun, moon and stars, the landscapes, forests, rocks and flowers will be substituted for the Divine Christ; a religion of spirituality will be succeeded by a religion of mere estheticism; from a sensuous religion the step will be short and natural to a religion of sensuality; and the end will be hopeless apostasy!



## II

### THE HOLY SPIRIT A PERSON

#### SCRIPTURAL PROOFS

The Bible constantly speaks of the Holy Spirit in language which characterizes Him as a *distinct, intelligent* PERSON. In passages too numerous to be quoted here, He is described as exercising the functions, thoughts, volitions, and emotions which belong to a distinct personality. None but a real, intelligent person could be "pleased," "vexed," "grieved;" or could "speak," "teach," "guide," "console," "intercede," "testify," impart spiritual life, and "divide His gifts severally to every man according to His own will;" all of which are repeatedly ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

Nor is it in a tropical or figurative sense that these things are ascribed to the Spirit of God in the Holy Scriptures. That poetic license does allow natural objects, and even objects of human invention, to be spoken of in a limited sense as living creatures, is admitted. The sun and moon are personified, and personal pronouns of masculine and feminine gender are applied to them. Seas, mountains, rivers, forests, cities, inferior orders of animate creation, and many of the productions of human contrivance, are also spoken of sometimes as performing the functions which belong to intelligence and personality. But



this is altogether different from the manner in which personality is ascribed to the Holy Spirit by the inspired writers. Whether treating particularly and fully, or only incidentally and partially of the nature and work of the Spirit, the biblical writers invariably employ such terms and forms of expression as leave us no room to doubt that they themselves steadfastly believed, whether right or wrong, in the proper personality of the Holy Ghost.

This is also more clearly manifest when we consider that they were accustomed to speak of the Holy Spirit in precisely the same terms as they applied to the Father; so that the personality of the one stands or falls with the personality of the other. Any person who will, with the aid of a concordance or Bible text-book, look up the numerous instances in which the inspired penmen have touched upon this subject, will not fail to be convinced that, so far as it is possible for human language to escape obscurity when applied to purely spiritual objects, their language must be considered as decisive of the fact that they believed in, and designed to teach, the distinct and proper personality of the Spirit.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT IS HE, NOT IT

Another evidence of the real personality of the Holy Spirit, and one which is closely allied to the preceding argument, is the fact that the Greek New Testament employs the masculine personal pronoun (*ἐκεῖνος*) with the neuter noun (*πνεῦμα*), Spirit, in speaking of the Comforter, where the neuter pronoun would be employed were it not that the noun



represents a person. Our Lord Himself speaks thus: "When *He*, the Spirit of truth is come, *He* will guide you into all truth: for *He* shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever *He* shall hear, that shall *He* speak; and *He* will show you things to come" (John 16: 13). In this brief passage there are six instances of the employment of the personal pronoun in the masculine gender, with a noun which in the original, is neuter; besides the fact that five distinct acts are ascribed to the Spirit which, by no allowable figure of speech, could be ascribed to an impersonal object.

And then St. Paul affirms: "The Spirit *Himself* beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8: 16, R. V.). Here we have another instance of the peculiar use of the masculine pronoun with the neuter noun, besides a form of expression which recognizes or implies the personality of the witnessing Spirit equally with the personality of those to whose consciousness His testimony is borne. The rendering of the foregoing passage, as given in the authorized version, employs the neuter instead of the masculine pronoun; but this was an error, which in the Revised Version, has been corrected.

#### ASSOCIATED WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON

The almost constant association of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, with two other persons, one of whom, the Father, is universally acknowledged to be possessed of a distinct and proper personality, and the ascription to each of them, and to the three in union,



of the same thoughts, volitions, actions, titles, attributes, and authority, with the same kind of worship, and without any distinction as to the degree in which all these things are ascribed to each of the three, furnishes another strong argument in proof of the distinct personality of the Spirit.

The work of creation is ascribed to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. In Genesis 1:1, we read: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In John 1:1-3, we read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. *All things were made by Him*, and without Him was not anything made that was made." And that this Word was none other than Christ, the Son of God, is made clear from the 14th verse: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," etc. In these two passages creation is ascribed to the Father and the Son respectively. But from other Scriptures we are informed that the *Spirit* of God was the active Agent in the work of creation. "The SPIRIT of God moved upon the face of the waters," and the dry land appeared. (Gen. 1:2.) By His SPIRIT "all the host" of the celestial worlds were made. (Psa. 33:6.) "By His SPIRIT He hath garnished the heavens" (Job 26:13). And by His SPIRIT the Lord made man in His own image and likeness. (Job 33:4.)

Providence is ascribed to a similar association of three persons. The One Hundred and Fourth Psalm beautifully celebrates the Providence of God over all His creatures. In verses 27-30, we read: "These wait all upon Thee; that Thou mayest give them their



meat in due season. That Thou givest them they gather: Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled: Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust. *Thou sendest forth Thy SPIRIT, they are created:* and thou renewest the face of the earth." As the preservation of all things is elsewhere ascribed to the Father and the Son, so here it is ascribed to the Spirit of God.

The inspiration of the Scriptures is also ascribed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son," etc. (Heb. 1:1). Here the inspiration of the prophets is ascribed to God, the Father. But St. Peter declares: "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake *as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST*" (2 Pet. 1:21); and also that "*the Spirit of CHRIST* which was in them did signify" (1 Pet. 1:11). By no legitimate rules of interpretation can the term, Holy Ghost, in the foregoing passage, be reduced to a figure of speech, to the name of an attribute, or to a mere synonym for the Divine energy. Upon any other theory than that of the distinct personality of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, these Scriptures are contradictory and unreconcilable. But, if the Holy Spirit be the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, united in one essence, the passages can be regarded as consistent with each other.

The Holy Ghost is likewise associated with the Father and the Son in the work of Redemption, in



such a way as implies a personality as distinct as that of the Father or the Son. "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14). The personality of the Father and the Son and their union in the great work of human salvation, are both made clear in this passage. Redemption originated in the mind of the everlasting Father. Its accomplishment was entrusted to the eternal Son. He "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word" (Eph. 5:25-27). He "gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:6). "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1:7). Redemption originated in the infinite grace of God the Father, and was wrought out by the voluntary humiliation and sacrifice of the ever-blessed Son. But, in order to the effectual application of redemptive grace to the children of men, it was necessary that the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ should be supplemented by the manifestation and ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Savior Himself ever insisted on this great truth, assuring His disciples that the full benefits of His mediation could not be communicated unto them until His bodily presence should be withdrawn, and should be succeeded by the Comforter. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." "He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He



shall hear that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." See John, 16th Chapter.

Let any man, not absolutely prepossessed with prejudice, read over that discourse of our Savior to His disciples, in which He purposely instructs them in the nature and work of the Spirit of God, and he will need no further confirmation in this matter. He is there called "the Comforter;" the name of a person, of one vested with an office; "another Comforter," to distinguish Him from Christ, who was a Comforter and a Person, as all allow. He declared that the Father would send Him; and that He would accordingly come; and that to teach, to lead, to guide them, and to bring things to their remembrance: that He should testify, or bear witness; that He should reprove the world; that He should hear, speak, receive of Christ, and show it to them. All these things are spoken, not occasionally, but in a direct, continued discourse, purposely designed to inform the disciples *who* He was, and *what* He would do for them. And if nothing more was spoken of Him in the whole Scripture, this alone would convince all unprejudiced men, that He is a distinct Person.\*

#### BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF THE SACRED THREE

In accordance with and confirmatory of this doctrine, all who are baptized into the faith of the Gospel are required to be baptized *into* "*the name* [εἰς τὸ ὄνομα] *of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST*" (Matt. 28:19). And the apostolic form of benediction recognizes this Trinity of Persons as the source of all grace, and peace and blessing; while the personality of each is kept distinct, and the

\*Dr. Owen's "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit."



prayer offered to the Three is, that all Christians may be common participants in the grace which proceeds from each of these Persons and from the union of the sacred Three. *"The grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of God, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST, be with you all. Amen."*

Now all will admit the personality of the Father and the Son. Some deny the Deity of Christ, but none that He is a Person, distinct from the Father. But what confusion it must introduce, and what an absurdity would it be, to join equally with these two Persons, in all that is vitally related to evangelical faith and obedience, the Holy Spirit, if He be not also a real and distinct Person!

## MANIFESTED UNDER VISIBLE SIGNS

The manifestation of the Holy Spirit under visible signs is another evidence of His distinct personality. When, according to the Father's promise, a visible pledge of the descent of the Spirit upon the Messiah was to be given, that thereby His great forerunner might have knowledge of Him, the descending Spirit assumed the form of a DOVE. As, in the original creation, "the Spirit of God moved [literally *brooded*] upon the face of the waters," cherishing, and communicating a prolific, vivifying quality to the whole, even as a dove gently moves upon her eggs, imparting vital warmth; so, preparatory to the new creation, He descended as a dove upon Him who was to be its immediate Author, and abode upon Him. It was not a real dove that descended upon our Lord, but some ethereal substance, generally sup-



posed to have been fiery in appearance, resembling a dove in form. The next visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit was in the form of fiery tongues, on the day of Pentecost. Now these manifestations, in which the Spirit of God was represented by those things which possess substance, and have a subsistence of their own, were evidently designed to teach us that the Holy Ghost is Himself a substance, having a distinct subsistence of His own. If this be not so, if the Spirit be only an influence, or an effect of the Divine energy, or an impersonal object of any kind, then we are incorrectly taught, and are led into gross error by these visible manifestations and signs.

Finally, there is scarcely a passage in the whole Bible which speaks of the Holy Spirit but which would be reduced to a gross and palpable absurdity by discarding His personality, and adopting the Arian or Socinian theory of interpretation. Arius himself admitted the personality of the Spirit, but regarded Him as a Being created by Christ, and hence, "the creature of a creature." But the Arians subsequently denied His personality entirely, and considered the Spirit of God as nothing more than the exerted energy of God. This view was also adopted by Socinus, and, with various modifications, has been received by his followers generally. Some of them regard the Holy Spirit as an attribute of God, and others resolve the Scriptures which speak of Him into a mere figurative representation of God Himself. But if we regard Him as a mere attribute, influence, manifestation, or personification of God, those Scriptures which speak of Him become mere jargon. Take, for instance, the Christian formula of baptism al-



ready referred to, and it would read: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the power [or, *of the influence, or manifestation*] of God." Also the apostolic benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the *power*," etc. And the passage, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power," would read: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the *power* [or influence, etc.], and with power."

These few instances will serve to illustrate the unintelligibility and absurdity with which the Scriptures would abound were the Holy Ghost a mere influence, or, as the Socinians say, the exerted energy of God. The foregoing are a few from among many evidences that might be adduced to prove that the Holy Spirit is a distinct and proper Person.



### III

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT A DIVINE PERSON

The Holy Spirit is not only a Person in the sense in which personality may be ascribed to created beings, but He is a *Divine Person*—a Person in a sense that can not be predicated of any created being, that is, as being characterized by *Essential Deity*. The following are some of the scriptural proofs of this proposition:

#### DIVINE TITLES

In Isaiah 6: 8, 9, the prophet, in relating the account of his wonderful vision of God's glory, says: "I heard the voice of the Lord [*Jehovah* in the original], saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me. And He said, Go and tell this people: Hear ye indeed, but understand not," etc. Then St. Paul, in Acts 28: 25, 26, in quoting the latter part of this passage from Isaiah, introduces it with these words: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand," etc. Now, if we admit the Divine inspiration of both Isaiah and St. Paul, we can but conclude that "the Holy Ghost" of St. Paul's statement is identical with "the Lord," or *Jehovah*, whom



Isaiah mentions, and that the name Jehovah, the ineffable name of Deity, is equally as applicable to the essential nature of the Holy Spirit as it is to that of the everlasting Father.

Again, in the Seventy-eighth Psalm, Israel is charged with "provoking the Most High in the wilderness;" as having "spoken against God," and as having "tempted God." On these accounts "JEHOVAH was wroth against His people." Referring to these same events, St. Stephen in his defense before the Jewish council, said: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). Here He whom the Psalmist calls by the names Jehovah, the Most High, and God, St. Stephen calls the Holy Ghost; and thus again is the Spirit of God identified with the Infinite One in a way that implies His Essential Deity.

Then we turn to Acts 5:3, and we find that Ananias is said to "lie to the Holy Ghost." But this is repeated and interpreted in the fourth verse as follows: "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." The same Person—the same object of Ananias' blasphemy—is expressed in both places; and what other conclusion can be legitimately drawn from this fact but that the Holy Ghost is God?

Then the Holy Spirit is called Lord in a sense that is applicable to God alone, as where the Apostle Paul, in 2 Cor. 3:17, says: "Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Here it is emphatically asserted that the Lord and the Spirit are identical.



## DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

In Hebrews 9:14 He is called "the eternal Spirit." But eternity, in the sense of timeless being, is predicable of God alone. "The eternal Spirit" is the timeless One, the self-existent Being, He who is "from everlasting to everlasting," and whom we call God.

Omnipresence is also ascribed to the Spirit of God. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me," etc. (Psalm 139:7-10).

He is also presented to us as an omniscient Being. "For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man, which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:10, 11).

Omnipotence is also an attribute of the Spirit of God. In Luke 1:35 He is called "the Power of the Highest." St. Paul tells us that Jesus Christ wrought by him "to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God" (Rom. 15:18, 19).

The Spirit is also the Author and Dispenser of wisdom and knowledge. "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom: to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:8).

Then, too, He is called "the Spirit of glory and of God" (1 Pet. 4:14).



In these, as also in numerous other instances, attributes are ascribed to the Holy Spirit by the inspired writers which are the attributes of God alone.

## DIVINE ACTIONS

We have already seen in the preceding chapter that He was the efficient Agent in the creation of all things. He is also said to have inspired "holy men of God" to write the sacred Scriptures. (2 Pet. 1: 21.)

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened [*made alive*] by the Spirit" (1 Pet. 3: 18).

Then, too, the work of regenerating and sanctifying believers, and in fact all the processes of grace involved in the "New Creation," are likewise ascribed to Him. God's children are all "born of the Spirit" (John 3: 5). They are saved "by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3: 5). Sanctification is particularly ascribed to the Spirit. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." See also Ezek. 37: 28; Rom. 15: 16; with 1 Pet. 1: 2.

These are all actions ascribed to the Holy Spirit, and which it were blasphemy to ascribe to any but the Deity.

## EQUAL WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON

The baptismal formula, given by Christ Himself, reads, "baptizing them into the name of the Father,



and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (R. V.); while the apostolic benediction says: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. 13:14). These Scriptures certainly imply that the Holy Spirit is equal to and one with the Father and the Son; also that whatever is ascribed to the other Persons is equally ascribed to the Holy Spirit; and that whatever is intended by the name of the Father and the Son equally concerns the Holy Ghost. It is not the name of the Father, and the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Ghost, else we should be required to baptize believers into the names of three different individuals; but it is rather *into the threefold name of the one God*, who has revealed Himself under the threefold aspect of Father, Son, and Spirit, and who in each of these revelations maintains His underived and infinite Godhead or Deity.

The name of God signifies either His Being or His authority. If it represents His Being, then the Being of the Spirit must be identical with that of the Father. If it signifies His authority, then the Spirit has the same authority with Him; and He who has the name and authority of God, is God—is a Divine Person.

#### THE SUBJECT OF BLASPHEMY

Blasphemy ordinarily means profaning the name of God by speaking lightly, irreverently, or contemptuously of Him. But as speech is an index of what a man *is* at heart, and of what he *thinks* in his mind,



blasphemy sometimes refers to one's action and character as well as to his words. It is with some such significance as this that Jesus warns men regarding blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. He says: "All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matt. 12:31, 32). Now, the Holy Ghost must be a Person, or He could not be the subject of blasphemy; He must also be a Divine Person, or blasphemy against Him could not be of such a malignant character as to exclude the person committing it from all hope of pardon, while the grant of forgiveness is not denied to any kind or degree of blasphemy against either the Father or the Son.

AS A DIVINE PERSON, therefore [says Dr. Richard Watson], our regards are justly due to Him as the object of worship and trust, of prayer and blessing; duties to which we are especially called, both by the especial consideration of His divinity, and by the affectingly benevolent and attractive character under which He is presented to us in the whole Scriptures.

In Creation we see Him moving upon the face of chaos, and reducing it to beautiful order; in Providence, "renewing the face of the earth," "garnishing the heavens," and "giving life" to men. In Grace, we behold Him expanding the prophetic scene to the vision of the seers of the Old Testament, and making a perfect revelation of Christ to the apostles of the New. He "reproves the world of sin," and works secret conviction of its evil and danger in the heart. He is "the Spirit of grace and supplication;" the softened



heart, the yielding will, all heavenly desires and tendencies are from Him. He hastens to the troubled spirits of penitent men, who are led by His influence to Christ, and in whose hearts He has wrought *faith*, with the news of pardon, and "bears witness" of their sonship "with their spirit." He aids their "infirmities;" "makes intercession for them;" inspires thoughts of consolation and feelings of peace; plants and perfects them in whatsoever things are pure, lovely, honest, and of good report; delights in His own work in the renewed heart; dwells in the soul as in a temple; and, after having rendered the Spirit of God, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," sanctified and meet for heaven, finishes His benevolent and glorious work by raising the bodies of the saints in immortal life at the last day. So powerfully does the Spirit of glory and of God claim our love, our praise and our obedience.\*

\*"Institutes," Vol. II., pp. 640, 641.



## IV

### NAMES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Spirit of God is designated in the Scriptures by various names and titles. Some of these are significant of His Nature or Essence; some, of His Personality; some, of His relation to the Father and the Son; some, of His moral attributes; and others, of His relation to, and His operations in, the work of redemption. It will be an interesting and profitable employment to consider briefly some of these scriptural appellations, together with their peculiar significations.

#### THE SPIRIT

The name Spirit is the most common term applied to the third Person of the Godhead. It is intended to signify His *Nature* or *Essence*. It is granted that the Hebrew and Greek words translated Spirit signify breath, wind, or that which moves invisibly. In the Old and New Testaments they are applied to a great variety of purposes, because of some general respects in which they agree. There is little difficulty, however, in determining their true sense from the connection in which they occur. Notwithstanding the ambiguity of the term in its Hebrew and Greek originals, it is sufficiently evident that the Scriptures furnish a full and complete revelation of



the Spirit of God as a substance every way distinct from everything else to which the name is applied; and that whatever is affirmed of Him relates either to His Person or His operations. Sometimes He is called "the Spirit" absolutely; sometimes "the Holy Spirit," "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ," "the Good Spirit," "the Free Spirit," "the Spirit of Truth," or "the Spirit of Holiness." The name Spirit, in its absolute use, denotes His Person. The qualifying terms employed respect His properties, and His relation to other persons.

The name Spirit was not given originally, as some may suppose, in allusion to the wind; for wind is an emblem only of the operations of the Person so called; but it was intended chiefly to denote His Being, or Substance, as purely spiritual or immaterial. We read that "God is a Spirit"—that is, He is a pure spiritual Substance, not confined to place, nor regarding one locality above another. If it be said on this account, that the name is not peculiar to the third Person of the Trinity, but denotes the Divine nature in an abstract sense, the answer is: While it is not primarily characteristic of the third Person, *it is peculiarly and constantly applied to Him in the Scriptures in a way which declares His special manner and order of existence, so that wherever the Holy Spirit is spoken of, His relation to the Father and the Son is included, since He is the Spirit of God.*

And herein there is an allusion to the breath of man [says Dr. Owen]; for as the vital breath of man has a continued emanation from him, and yet is never so utterly separated from him as to forsake him, so the Spirit of the



Father and the Son proceeds from them by a continual Divine emanation, still abiding one with them. Hence our Savior signified the communication of the Spirit to the disciples by *breathing* on them. (John 20: 22.) These allusions, indeed, are weak and imperfect, wherein substantial things are compared with accidental, infinite with finite, and eternal with temporary; their disagreement is greater than their agreement, yet such allusions our weakness needs and gains instruction thereby.\*

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

The title Holy Spirit is of frequent occurrence in the Scriptures, especially in the New Testament. This appellation is given by way of eminence, to denote the eternal, glorious holiness of His Nature, just as God the Father is called "the Holy One of Israel," and is described as "glorious in holiness," to denote this glorious property of His Being. The Spirit of God is called Holy also, and is described as "the Spirit of Holiness," because it is by Him alone that men are sanctified and made holy. He communicates holiness to man by the regeneration and sanctification of his heart, making believers "partakers of the Divine nature," "that we might be partakers of His holiness." Sanctification, from its beginning to its consummation, is effected "by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15: 16). "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation *through sanctification of the Spirit* and the belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2: 13). As He is the Administrator of all God's will on earth, He is appropriately styled the HOLY Spirit also with respect to all His operations.

\*Owen's "Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," p. 35.



This third Person of the Trinity is also designated as "THE ETERNAL SPIRIT" (Heb. 9:14). The appellation denotes His eternal procession from the Father and the Son. He is in no sense a limited or finite Being. The measure of His existence is "from everlasting to everlasting." He "inhabiteth eternity."

"A thousand ages in their flight,  
With Him are as a fleeting day;  
Past, present, future, to His sight,  
At once their various scenes display."

#### THE GOOD SPIRIT

The Scriptures also designate Him as the Good Spirit. The Psalmist sings: "Thy Spirit is good: lead me into the land of uprightness" (Psalm 143:10). Or, as a better rendering, "Thy good Spirit shall lead me," etc. He is called the *good* Spirit because His essential nature is goodness, or benevolence. "There is none good but One, that is, God" (Matt. 19:17). The Holy Spirit reveals and communicates the riches of God's goodness to us, and all His operations toward us and within us are full of excellence. And "the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth" (Eph. 5:9).

#### THE FREE SPIRIT

David prayed: "Uphold me with thy Free Spirit" (Psalm 51:12). The Spirit of God is called a "free Spirit" because He is free and unrestrained in Himself, and, in His operations, He is like the wind that "bloweth where it listeth" (John 3:8). He is free



from all that is ignoble and servile, and is princely and royal in His character. The expression, "free Spirit," we are told, might be translated "noble, or princely Spirit," with eminent propriety.

The Spirit of God is not only free and independent Himself, but His mission is to make men free. "The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus," said Paul, "hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). Christ paid the ransom for the captives of sin and Satan, and the Holy Spirit actually emancipates them from their bondage. He breaks the fetters of the captive soul, brings him forth from his prison-house, and causes him to sing and shout for joy. He delivers the soul from "the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity," "into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." The Spirit of God is a *Free Spirit*, and they who "walk in the Spirit" walk in glorious and perfect freedom. "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17).

#### SPIRIT OF GOD, SPIRIT OF THE LORD, ETC.

The Holy Spirit is also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord, etc. "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me," etc. (Isa. 61:1). In the account of the creation the Hebrew name *Elohim*, which is a plural term, is used to represent the Creator, probably with the design of indicating a distinction of persons in the Godhead. "In the beginning God [*Elohim*] created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). "And the Spirit of God [*Elo-*



*him*] moved upon the face of the waters" (Ver. 2). The name Jehovah is mentioned in Chapter 2:4, but *Elohim* is joined with it; so the former name is not used in the account of the creation, because it respects only the unity of the Divine Essence or Nature. Now the third Person is called the Spirit of God because of His eternal procession or emanation from the everlasting Father, even as Christ is called the Son of God because of His eternal generation.

#### THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

He is also designated, and originally on the same account, as the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the Son. The terms "Spirit of God" and "Spirit of Christ" are used interchangeably, sometimes in the same passage, as follows: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the *Spirit of God* dwell in you. Now if any man have not the *Spirit of Christ*, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9-11). The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are here considered as one and the same. In writing to the Galatians St. Paul says: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the *Spirit of His Son* into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Chap. 4:6). From these Scriptures it appears that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son in precisely the same sense that He is the Spirit of God the Father.

It may be urged by some that He is the Spirit of Christ only because sent by Christ to supplement His mediation and render it effectual in believers; but this could not be, unless He had antecedently been the Spirit of the Son. St. Peter affirms that



the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets who foretold "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. 1:10, 11). Nor does this refer to His being anointed with the Spirit, for His human nature, which was the subject of this anointing, did not then exist.

The chief and formal reason why the Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of the Son" and "the Spirit of Christ" [wisely remarks Dr. Owen], is because of His procession or emanation from His Person also, without respect to which He could not properly be called the Spirit of Christ; but on that supposition He may be, He is, so denominated.\*

The title "the Comforter" is not considered in this connection, but is reserved for more detailed treatment in subsequent chapters. The foregoing are some of the names and titles whereby the nature and subsistence of that Divine Agent whose ministry we are considering are declared. Numerous other titles are applied to Him in the Word of God, chiefly to denote His offices and operations in the application of redemption to the hearts of believers. These will demand and receive consideration under other departments of this work, and hence need not be specially treated here.

Glory be to God the Father,  
Glory be to Christ the Son;  
Glory to the Holy Spirit,  
Glory to the Three in One.

\*"Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," p. 38.



## V

### EMBLEMS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In revealing Himself to man God always accommodates Himself to human weakness and to our limited capacity for comprehending that which is purely spiritual. When He would make known to us the sublime mysteries of the spiritual world, "He must illustrate His meaning by the fragments of light and beauty which are scattered on the higher side of our own inferior world." Hence He speaks in parables, teaches by symbolical representation, and illustrates spiritual truths by natural emblems, thereby accommodating Himself to our limited and imperfect understanding, in His ministry of revelation.

The nature and ministry of the Holy Spirit are subjects for the revelation of which this method is both suitable and necessary, and for which it is wisely and extensively employed in the Scriptures. How else could things of so abstruse and mysterious a character be brought within the range of human apprehension? All the concerns of the Holy Spirit are eminently "the deep things of God," and are in their nature heavenly, and far remote from everything that the heart of man, in the mere exercise of reason, is able to conceive. Accordingly His nature and operations are set forth in the Scriptures, under various and impressive emblems, some of which it



will be both interesting and profitable for us now to consider. In pursuing this study let it constantly be borne in mind, that, when God declares His virtue by any sensible object, there is always some important relation between the sign and the thing signified. See John 3:8.

## WATER

One of the commonest Scripture emblems of the Holy Spirit is WATER. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37-39). In like manner God declared by one of the Old Testament seers, concerning the latter-day glory: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring" (Isa. 44:3).

Water is cleansing, fertilizing, refreshing, abundant, free, indispensable to life, satisfying to the thirsty; and, as it pursues its course in numberless streams and rivers, or descends from the clouds in copious showers, it makes glad the waste places of the earth, and distributes manifold blessings on every hand. In all these respects it is a fitting emblem of the gracious gift and ministry of the Holy Spirit to them who are the heirs of salvation. Is not this



what was signified by Ezekiel's vision of the holy waters (Ezekiel 47:1-12) issuing out of the temple from beneath the altar, increasing in depth and breadth in their onward flow, until they became "waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over," and which carried with them healing, and life, and abundant fruitfulness whithersoever they went? "Rivers of living water!" He that drinketh of this water shall never thirst; but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. (John 4:14.) How beautiful an emblem of the Holy Spirit and of the grace which He imparts!

#### RAIN

Closely related to the foregoing emblem, but deserving of special consideration, the Holy Spirit is represented under the symbol of RAIN. "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately [the marginal reading is, "*He hath given you a teacher of righteousness*"] and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the first month," etc. (Joel 2:23).

The context will show that this language was uttered in immediate connection with Joel's prophecy concerning that glorious and full effusion of the Spirit, the first instalment of which was given on the day of Pentecost. As the rain descends, filling the pools, causing the earth to bring forth and bud, and bringing on the golden harvest, it is an apt and beautiful emblem of the refreshing, life-giving, fructi-



fyng, and maturing influences of the Spirit of God, as He descends in the plenitude of His gracious manifestations and operations upon the Church of Christ.

“The former rain and the latter rain” are promised in the foregoing prophecy. In Palestine “the former rain” falls about the latter part of October, which is the seed-time of that country. “The latter rain” falls in the month of April, after which the weather becomes serene, and the crops ripen. Between the seasons of the “early” and the “latter” rains the weather is variable, more or less rain falling during the entire winter. The wheat harvest takes place in May. By the middle of August the fruits are all gathered; and from that time until the early, or October rains, prevail the scorching heats and droughts of summer. What expressive emblems of spiritual blessing are the abundant showers of rain after this trying season is past! The day of Pentecost witnessed the descent of the Holy Spirit as “the early rain,” but His manifestation as “the latter rain” which is to usher in the happy harvest time of the world’s redemption, is yet to be realized. He who has given us “the former rain moderately,” will also send us in abundance “the latter rain in its season.”

#### WIND

The Scriptures also speak of the Holy Spirit under the similitude of WIND. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John 3: 8).



The ministry of the Holy Ghost, like the movement of the wind, is independent and incomprehensible. One of the sensible miracles which attended the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was "a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind" (Acts 2:2). The Holy Spirit seemed to be in haste to come down from heaven and testify to the glorification of Christ. He came with a suddenness that surprised those of most lively faith. It is significant also that the symbol of His advent was "a sound as of a rushing mighty *wind*;" a sound as of a hurricane or tornado. The wind is subtle and unseen, mysterious and mighty. We can not foresee its coming, nor can we tell from what quarter it will blow. As it rushes on vehemently and irresistibly, sweeping everything before it, filling every vacuum, and ceaselessly accomplishing its work, it is a striking symbol of the power, omnipresence, activity, and energy of the Holy Ghost, in the ministry He performs in the work of redemption. The same symbol is used by the prophet Ezekiel. When standing among the dry bones in the valley of vision, he cried: "Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live" (Chapter 37:9). And as the wind came at the prophet's bidding, in the valley of the vision of death, and "the dead stood up an exceeding great army," so comes the Spirit of the Blessed to breathe immortal life and perfect peace into the burdened and longing souls of men. And as the rushing wind enters and fills every vacuum, so the Holy Spirit, poured out from on high, enters and fills every heart emptied of self and sin, and there abides in the plenitude of His gracious operations.



## FIRE

Another common and significant emblem of the Holy Spirit is FIRE. John the Baptist repeatedly designated Christ as He that should "baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire." Accordingly the baptism of the Holy Ghost came on the day of Pentecost accompanied with a fiery manifestation. "There appeared unto them cloven tongues, *like as of fire*, and it sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:3). Fire is illuminating, cheering, refining, purifying, searching, consuming. How apt and suggestive a symbol of the Holy Ghost, who enlightens us in spiritual things, inspires our hearts with heavenly comfort; refines and purifies our natures; searches out and reveals "the deep things of God;" and consumes the dross from our hearts, leaving only the pure gold of Christ-like character and grace!

Fire may also be considered as symbolizing the *ardor* of the Holy Spirit, and the holy enthusiasm inspired in every heart and in every Church baptized with the Holy Ghost. "Consider the beautifulness of the consistency which combines a sensation of *ardor* with a Gospel of love. Fire indicates the point at which love reaches enthusiasm. A Church without fire is a Church without enthusiasm, and consequently without adequate credentials and authority."

In 1 Thess. 5:19, we are admonished to "Quench not the Spirit." Here also the Spirit is represented under the emblem of fire. The intimate relation between the Spirit and the Word of God indicates how He may be quenched. The Word of God is the fuel on which this fire feeds. Indifference to the Word,



therefore, is a certain means of quenching this Divine fire in the soul. Hence, after the admonition, "Quench not the Spirit," the apostle cautions us, in the next verse, to "Despise not prophesyings." And again we read: "Is not my Word like as a fire? saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:29).

Mr. Fletcher in a letter to Mr. Ireland, once wrote as follows: "An over-eager attention to the doctrine of the Spirit has made me, in some degree, overlook the medium by which the Spirit works, I mean *the Word of Truth*, which is the wood by which the heavenly fire warms us. I rather expected lightning, than a steady fire by means of fuel. I mention my error to you, lest you too should be involved therein. May the Lord help us to steer clear of every rock."

#### OIL

No other emblem employed in the Scriptures to represent the Holy Spirit is more beautifully appropriate to its design than that of oil. Soothing, healing, quieting, beautifying, consecrating, it admirably symbolizes the virtue of the Divine Comforter as realized in the hearts of all to whom He is given. The Spirit was poured upon the Lord Jesus like an effusion of excellent oil, anointing Him for His ministry as our Mediator and Redeemer, and that, through His mediation, a like anointing might be secured to all who should believe on Him as their Savior. Long before His advent as the Messiah, He spake by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, He hath sent



me to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives," etc. (Chapter 61:2, etc.). And when, at length, He came and had entered upon His public ministry, His first discourse was concerning this very prophecy. The scriptural account is as follows:

And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.

It was said of Jesus, also, because of His redeeming work: "Therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Heb. 1:9). Christ received this Divine anointing in a preëminent degree; but the same Spirit, as a holy anointing, an abiding unction, is also promised to all who believe in the Son of God. "Now He which established us with you, and hath anointed us, is God; who also hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1:21, 22). "But the anointing which ye have



received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you" (1 John 2: 27).

#### THE DOVE

Another beautiful emblem of the Holy Spirit is the DOVE. "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and he [John] saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him" (Matt. 3: 16). "And John bare record saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him" (John 1: 32). From other Scriptures we learn that the dove is the symbol of simplicity, innocence, gentleness, love, and fidelity. See Hos. 7: 11; Matt. 10: 16; with Gen. 8: 8. A dove was the returning harbinger of God's favor after the deluge; and even so the dove-like Spirit of God comes to the heart of every believer, bringing the peaceful, comforting assurance of his acceptance in Christ. The Spirit of God is never presented to us in characters of terror, but always as a Being of infinite tenderness, gentleness, and sensibility. "It is remarkable," as McCheyne has suggested, "that, although we read of the wrath of God the Father, and of the wrath of the Lamb, we nowhere read of the wrath of the Holy Ghost. He is said to be grieved, but never to be angry. It has also been said, 'If Christ is called the Head of the Church, well may the Spirit be called the heart of the Church.'" May the dove-like Spirit, the Holy Ghost, communicate His amiable virtues to every member of the Church of Christ.



## A SEAL

In the New Testament we find such expressions as the following: "Who also hath *sealed* us." "In whom also after that ye believed ye were *sealed* with that Holy Spirit of promise." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are *sealed* unto the day of redemption." The process of sealing, as employed among men, involves four things: First, the idea of *impression*. It is the communication of the character or image that is on the seal to the object sealed. Secondly, the idea of *security*. The seal gives security to the performance of deeds, wills, contracts, etc. In the third place, the seal is the token of *possession* and *preservation*. Men put their seal upon valuable articles in their possession to indicate and prove their ownership of the same; and certain treasures and valuable possessions are sealed up that they may be kept safe and inviolable. A fourth object of sealing is that of *authentication*. The impress of the royal seal on any document gives it the sanction of the Government; and the transfer of the royal seal from the Sovereign or State officer to another person, was, in ancient time, to invest that person with plenary authority for the occasion.

In all these respects there is an analogy to the work of the Spirit in the sealing of believers. For in this sealing process the Holy Ghost communicates His own image to the soul; dwells in the believer as the seal of the new covenant—a security for the fulfilment of all its promises;—marks him as God's peculiar treasure to be preserved inviolable unto the day of redemption; gives to him the royal sanction;



and fully authorizes and empowers him for all the duties and functions of the "royal priesthood" to which he belongs.

It is more particularly in this latter sense that the seal is an emblem of the Holy Spirit, or that the Spirit is said to be the seal of believers. It should be remembered that it is God the Father who seals us, and that the Holy Ghost is the seal. The gift of the Spirit as an indwelling Comforter and Sanctifier is God's seal unto us. Our sealing is in Christ, and is of the same character as that with which He was sealed. "For Him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6:27). "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). The sealing of Christ was the measureless communication of the Holy Spirit unto Him, authorizing Him unto and preparing Him for the duties of His mediatorial office, and demonstrating to the world God's presence with Him and His approbation of Him. He was "justified in the Spirit" (1 Tim. 1:16). So God's sealing of believers is His gracious communication of the Spirit to them as a qualification for all the responsibilities of their holy calling, and a demonstration to themselves and others of their acceptance with Him. Blessed, indeed, are they who know the Holy Ghost as the seal of God upon their hearts!

#### TONGUES OF FIRE

The Holy Ghost was manifested at Pentecost under the symbol of CLOVEN TONGUES. "There appeared unto



them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them" (Acts 2: 3).

The tongue is the organ of speech or language, and, as an emblem of the Holy Spirit may be considered as signifying *inspired utterance*. There is an outgoing power resulting from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, a readiness and ability to declare what He hath wrought in the soul, indicating, as Dr. Joseph Parker suggests, that what every man receives of the Divine unction and power, he holds for the benefit of others, as well as for the comfort and edification of his own soul. The appearance of "*cloven tongues*" would seem to be significant of the diversity of languages in which the Gospel was authorized to be preached from that day. "At the building of Babel the language of the people was confounded," says Dr. Adam Clarke; "and, in consequence of this, they became scattered over the face of the earth; at this foundation of the Christian Church the gift of various languages was given to the apostles, that the scattered nations might be gathered, and united under one Shepherd and Superintendent of all souls."\*

Moses once exclaimed: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them" (Num. 11: 29). And Joel prophesied of an outpouring of the Spirit "upon all flesh," under which the "sons" and the "daughters," the "servants" and the "handmaidens," should "prophesy" (Joel 2: 28, 29). The realization of that for which Moses wished and of which Joel prophesied, was experienced at Pentecost, when the dis-

\*"Commentary."



ciples "were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." It is also the privilege of the Church to realize the same to-day. He who is baptized with the Holy Ghost will speak with another tongue—will have a new language! Under the inspiration and power of the Spirit the Gospel is now preached in nearly all the languages of the world, and wherever it is preached by men who have experienced the sanctification and joy of this pentecostal baptism, it becomes a power to make men's hearts burn within them, and the means of bringing light, and life, and salvation to all who receive it reverently and with faith. Significant of these glorious effects which were to follow, the Holy Ghost appeared at Pentecost, under the symbol of cloven tongues of fire.



## VI

### DISPENSATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

God has been pleased to carry on His work in Redemption, as in Creation, by a gradual and progressive method. Through six successive stages of development the work of Creation was brought to that perfect consummation, in which the Divine Creator, beholding all that He had made, pronounced it "very good." Even so there have been great and successive epochs or crises in the working out of Redemption, and in God's progressive revelation of Himself and of His will to the human family.

### REVELATION OF TRUTH PROGRESSIVE

The truths and purpose of God are in themselves incapable of progress; but not the revelation of those truths. In nature, the rising sun scatters the mists of the morning, and brings out into light first one prominence and then another, till every hill and valley is clothed in splendor. The landscape was there before, but it was not seen. So in Revelation, the progress is not in the truth, but in the clearness and impressiveness with which Scripture reveals it.

This gradual and progressive method in Redemption has a remarkable illustration in those Scriptures which relate to our Lord and Savior. At first a single promise was made in Eden, which contained a prediction of mercy, and foretold, in terms mysterious, the advent and mission of the world's Redeemer. (Gen. 3: 15.) Then the first act of ac-



ceptable worship was a typical recognition of the atonement, and an expression of faith in the fulfilment of the first prophetic promise. (Gen. 4: 4; Heb. 11: 4.) With the lapse of time the promises and types are multiplied. In the biographies of the patriarchs, Enoch, Noah, Job, Melchizedek, and particularly in the lives of Abraham and his immediate descendants, there is a constant augmentation of type and prophecy, all pointing to Christ and His atoning sacrifice. Then the Mosaic age succeeded, in which a multitude of other typical persons, places, objects, rites, and institutions were introduced, and the law defining and explaining them was given. Next came the prophetic age. Between the days of Samuel and Malachi—a period approximating seven hundred years—a succession of prophets appear, who gradually set forth the character and mission of the Messiah, foretell the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the world and the universal spread and final triumph of the Gospel, and declare the final and glorious consummation of Redemption as it shall issue in the world's millennial glory. In all these successive revelations the bounds of the first promise have not been exceeded; but its meaning has been more clearly unfolded, and the nature of the Redeemer's work disclosed in a more complete and detailed manner. In these respects "the law and the prophets" were superior to the typical or shadowy revelations of the patriarchal age, and more fully prepared the way for the final manifestation of the promised "seed of the woman." In these respects also the Gospel surpasses "the law and the prophets" as greatly as they exceeded the obscure promise made to the fallen pair in Eden.\*

#### DISPENSATIONS

This gradual and progressive unfolding and development of God's purpose in Redemption is sometimes spoken of as dispensational; or, as characterized by great and successive epochs, which are com-

\*Angus' "Handbook of the Bible," pp. 151, 152.



monly termed dispensations.. Some writers divide the history of redemption into three, some into four, and others into seven distinct eras or dispensations, just as the history of the world is variously arranged, as to its principal epochs, by different historians.

It best serves the purpose of the present writing to consider only those three great dispensations of grace to which reference has been made in a preceding chapter, and which correspond to and are respectively presided over by the three Persons of the Godhead.

John Fletcher, in his *Portraiture of St. Paul as a Model Pastor*, lays great emphasis on the importance of a thorough knowledge of these three great eras of spiritual life which he denominates the dispensations of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; since without it the servants of God can not successfully apply Gospel truth, or make full proof of their ministry.

Through all the ages of religious history, as we have already shown, there has been a progressive movement toward spirituality. The trend of inspired thought in each successive dispensation has been toward the epoch of the Spirit, as the culminating era of revealed religion. The three great dispensations of grace, though successive in the order of development, are as inseparably connected as are the different hues of the rainbow; and, under the present economy, they are coëxistent. The ideal Christian, according to the New Testament, is one who, in personal experience, has passed through the dispensations of the Father and the Son, into the dispensation of the Holy Ghost; and in whom the great funda-



mental truths and principles of all the dispensations meet, and blend, and coëxist with sanctifying influence. Of those now living on the earth, and who are accepted of God, some are living, experimentally, in the dispensation of the Father, some in the dispensation of the Son, and others in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, according to the different progress they have made in spiritual things.

If this threefold distinction were better understood among Christian people, it would tend to promote the exercise of charity toward the less enlightened subjects of God's kingdom, and would furnish an effectual motive for the abatement of bigotry. A clear perception of this among Christian ministers would also enable them rightly to distinguish the various classes composing the mixed assemblies to whom they minister, and so to understand their various attainments as "rightly to divide the Word of truth" to all. See Fletcher's Portraiture of St. Paul.

#### THE DISPENSATION OF THE FATHER

The dispensation of the Father is chiefly distinguished as a dispensation of *Law*. It reached its climax at Mt. Sinai, where the Law was given, and is promulgated from that point. The giving of the Law was attended with phenomena which impressed the multitudes of Israel, and even Moses himself, who was chosen to be the mediator of that covenant, with deepest awe and terror. "There were thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud: so that all



the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God: and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice" (Exod. 19:16-19).

The state of mind produced by these phenomena was typical of that which characterizes those who serve God under the dispensation of the Father. *Fear* is the motive which chiefly influences their conduct and shapes their characters. They "fear God and work righteousness." Their obedience is prompted by fear rather than by filial love. They are void of the settled peace which is provided for them in the Gospel, and know little or nothing of "joy in the Holy Ghost." They are often in doubt of their acceptance with God, and at times are distressed at the terrible threatenings of the Divine Law. Still they are kept from voluntary sin, and are incited to obedience and well-doing.

This class of persons exists in all lands, but chiefly in non-evangelical countries, Papal, Pagan, and Mohammedan. As Fletcher says, "Now and then an honest Deist, or a devout Unitarian, with the head warped by early implanted error, but a sincere heart, may be found amid the full blaze of Gospel truth, still serving God in the same dispensation with uncircumcised Abraham in Mesopotamia."

These we are bound to recognize as standing in



the Divine favor, though serving in a spirit and manner characteristic of an inferior dispensation. For "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him" (Acts 10: 34, 35).

#### DISPENSATION OF THE SON

The dispensation of the Son is a dispensation of *Reconciliation*. It reached its culmination on Calvary, when "Christ our passover [was] sacrificed for us;" and from that point it is promulgated throughout the world. Christ is the "Mediator between God and men, who gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time." We are "reconciled to God through the death of His Son." "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Those who are under this dispensation no longer cry out, in their bondage: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" But, grateful for, and exulting in, their accomplished deliverance, they exclaim: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men;" or, with victorious Paul, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Under the dispensation of the Son," says Mr. Fletcher, "the doubts of believers are dissipated, like those of the two disciples who journeyed to Emmaus, while they discover more clearly, and experience more powerfully, the truths of the Gospel." The love of God now enters their hearts and becomes a motive to obedience and service. Those who are reconciled to God adopt the language of St. John, "We



love Him because He first loved us." Under the dispensation of the Father they constantly experienced the fear of God, and were influenced by fear in a much greater degree than by love. Under the economy of reconciliation love predominates over fear, as a motive to obedience, though the love they experience is still mixed with that fear which characterizes those who live under the dispensation of the Father. In this state they are yet in a measure "carnal"—knowing Christ "after the flesh," rather than after "the power of His resurrection." Such were the Corinthian Christians, to whom St. Paul found it necessary to write: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."

They are not fully impressed with the divinity of Christ. The robe of His humanity has not been made transparent for the dazzling radiance of the Godhead to shine through. Jesus is not yet glorified to their hearts, because the Spirit, the Glorifier, has not taken up His abode in them. Hence they are but children; their strength is small; they are weak and unsteady. They have not full assurance. After brief periods of joyful trust, doubts return to shake their confidence. Yet they testify of their love to God gaining ascendancy over fear.\*

In this state they are conscious of an inward necessity and longing for something which they can not find words to define or express, but to meet and supply which the special ministry of the Comforter is promised by our Lord. In those Scriptures which disclose the gift of the indwelling Comforter as their

\*Dr. Steele on "The Three Dispensations."



blood-bought heritage, and as their present privilege to possess and enjoy, they discover that *higher spiritual realm*, which Mr. Fletcher designates as "the Kingdom of the Holy Ghost."

#### DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT

While the dispensation of the Father is a dispensation of Law, and that of the Son an economy of Reconciliation, the dispensation of the Holy Ghost is chiefly distinguished as a dispensation of *Sanctifying Power*. This grand spiritual era was inaugurated on the ever-memorable day of Pentecost, and the New Law of light and life which it dispenses is promulgated from that point. The earlier economies were preparatory to this; and the culmination of the three dispensations brings in that completed revelation of Divine truth, and that full unfolding of the Divine character, which result in a new and superior era of spiritual light and life.

Those who live experimentally in the dispensation of the Holy Ghost are all "filled with the Spirit." They "walk in the light as God is in the light," and enjoy conscious "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth [them] from all [inward as well as outward] sin." The Spirit of adoption now dwells in them as an *abiding* Comforter; whereas His testimony was formerly to some extent indirect and intermittent. And to the direct assurance of sonship with God, He now adds the assurance of inward and complete sanctification. "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified, *whereof*



*the Holy Ghost also is a witness unto us*" (Heb. 10:14, 15).

"Fear, which had a painful predominance in the dispensation of the Father, and shadowed the brightness of the Sun of Righteousness in the dispensation of Jesus Christ, is now completely banished." Love takes the throne, and, swaying its mild but mighty sceptre, bids sin, and fear, and grief depart, and inaugurates within the heart a "kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." With the Holy Ghost as our indwelling Comforter, our salvation is no longer God manifested in an outward and visible Christ, but God manifested as "Christ in [us], the hope of glory." "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:17, 18).

The dispensation of the Spirit, in its full experimental import, is a *reign of "Perfect Love."* "No tormenting emotion can abide the presence of the Comforter." Under this glorious economy "the peace of God that passeth all understanding keeps the heart and mind, through Christ Jesus;" and the soul is enabled to "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks."

What was St. Paul's privilege, in this matter of inward assurance concerning his heavenly inheritance and meetness for it, is the privilege of every believer in Jesus Christ. It is not the will of God that any of His children should be in doubt or uncertainty concerning spiritual and heavenly things. His



will is that every one should dwell in the cloudless light of "full assurance,"—that all should rejoice in the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." To this very end the indwelling Comforter is given, that He may reveal in our consciousness "the deep things of God"—the foretaste of eternal life and glory. And the great need of the world to-day is, men and women so baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost that they can preach and testify with certainty—that they can, with joyous confidence, publish what they experimentally *know* of Christ and of His power to save. The "unction from the Holy One" imparts this knowledge of spiritual things to all on whom it is bestowed. (1 John 2:20.)



## VII

### DISPENSATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—CONTINUED

#### OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

It may be objected [says Dr. Steele] that this view of the successive gradation of privilege under the three Persons of the Godhead has a tendency to degrade the Father before the brighter glories of the Son's kingdom, and to belittle the Son in the ministration of the Spirit. But a little examination of experience, Church history, and the Scriptures, will obviate this objection. They who are brought to the cross of Christ testify to a new and profound appreciation of the work of the Father; while all who enter into the dispensation of the Spirit bear witness that Christ is, in an astonishing manner, exalted in their estimation. In all ages of the Church we look for the highest spirituality and purity, and the most devout reverence towards the Father, where Jesus Christ has been exalted, and for the most ardent love to Christ where this item of the creed has been emphasized and explained—"I believe in the Holy Ghost." Turning to the Scriptures, we find the highest honor accruing to the Father is when men honor His Son. "To Him shall every knee bow, *to the glory of God the Father.*" But Jesus is not fully known till the Spirit shows Him to our hearts, and glorifies Him. *No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*

Thus each brightening dispensation reflects honor upon the Divine Person of the preceding, demonstrating that the Divine Persons are not independent and rival deities, but one in nature and essence, whose different perfections are more clearly manifested to a world of sinners by this threefold development.



## A PRINCIPLE COMMON TO THE DISPENSATIONS

*In each successive dispensation the spirituality of the Church has been conditioned upon its firm belief of, and its practical adherence to, the principal truth or doctrine for the revelation and propagation of which that particular economy was inaugurated.* Apostasy always begins with neglecting or ignoring the principal truth revealed and emphasized by the dispensation under which it occurs. The earlier apostasy of the Jewish church consisted in ignoring the Unity of God and embracing polytheism and idolatry. Their final apostasy was occasioned by their rejection of the Messiah, and resulted in the entire destruction of their civil and religious polity. Under the present economy apostasy necessarily has its beginning in despising the Person and rejecting the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Agent to whom all the affairs pertaining to our reconciliation with God have been committed.

From the beginning of the world [says Dr. Owen], the principal revelation that God made of Himself, was the Unity of His nature and His sovereignty over all; and herein the Person of the Father was immediately represented, with His power and authority. In this state of things the only apostasy of the Church could be polytheism and idolatry. Accordingly, the people of Israel were continually prone to these abominations; and were continually punished for them. At length God put an end to their idolatry by their total desolation and captivity in Babylon. (Ezek. 16:62; 23:27, 28.) Again they were tried with a new dispensation. The Son of God was sent to them in the flesh. To receive and obey Him was now to be the principal instance and trial of their faith. Here, also, the greater part of that Church and people fell by their unbelief—apostatized from God, and became



neither Church nor people. (John 8:24.) The Jews being rejected, the Son of God calls and gathers another Church, founding it in His own Person, with faith and the profession of it therein. (Matt. 16:18, 19.) In this new Church this foundation is fixed—that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is to be honored even as we honor the Father; and herein all who are duly called Christians agree. But now, Christ, being ascended to the Father, has committed all His affairs in the Church and in the world to the Holy Spirit (John 16:7, etc.); and with this design—that *the Person of the Spirit may be singularly exalted in the Church*. Wherefore the duty of the Church now, immediately respects the Spirit of God, who acts toward it in the name of the Father and the Son. And with respect to Him it is, that the Church in its present state is capable of apostasy from God. And whatever is found of this nature among any has its beginning here; for the sin of despising His Person and rejecting His work now, is of the same nature with the idolatry of old, and with the Jews' rejection of the Person of the Son.

## DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT A CULMINATION

The dispensation of the Spirit is the culmination of Gospel light and glory. Therein God has communicated Himself by the highest revelation, and the most intimate communion, of which man is capable. He now manifests Himself no longer through the visible creation only, no more as an authoritative Voice from without, but as a Law within the heart—as a Spirit mingling and communing with a spirit. The dispensation of the Spirit, with its immeasurable wealth of privilege and blessing, is vastly superior to that dispensation in which the Son of God was manifested in the flesh. Our Savior evidently designed to convey this thought when He said, "Verily



I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. 11:11).

Here the wilderness preacher is lifted to a pedestal higher than that of David the king, Moses the law-giver, or Abraham the founder of the Hebrew nation. Yet he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. We are to understand the kingdom of heaven as St. Paul expounds it, as consisting of righteousness, peace, and joy *in the Holy Ghost*. It did not consist in seeing the Incarnate Lord, for John the Baptist saw Him; nor in gazing on His miraculous works, and listening to His Divine utterances, as did many unbelieving Jews; nor in being numbered among His disciples, as were many who went away and walked no more with Him; nor in being enrolled with the twelve apostles, as was Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him. Jesus must have referred to that fulness of spiritual grace and power brought in on the day of Pentecost, to be the permanent inheritance of all who fully believe the promise of the Father. Every soul, however ignorant and uncultured, which is a habitation of God through the Spirit, every human body which is made a temple of the Holy Ghost, however weak and deformed, is greater than he whom the infallible Messiah pronounced superior to all his predecessors. Such a person may the reader be, if he will by faith enter into the dispensation of the blessed Comforter, far more glorious than the days when the visible form of Jesus shed its radiance on earth.\*

The dispensation of the Spirit "exceeds in glory" the dispensations which have preceded it, in that it is characterized by *a fulness and permanence* of the Holy Spirit's presence and gifts in the Church of Christ unknown in those earlier economies.

The Spirit of God has in some measure been mani-

\*"Gift of the Holy Ghost," pp. 103, 104.



fested in His gracious operations through all the ages. He was with the patriarchs of ancient time. Pharaoh perceived that the Spirit of God was in Joseph. (Gen. 41:38.) He was with Joshua, with Samuel, with Saul, and with David. By His immediate inspiration the prophets wrote and spoke. (2 Pet. 1:21.) Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon, and Anna, all experienced His gracious visitations and manifestations. (Luke, 1st Chapter.) The Holy Ghost was upon John the Baptist from his birth. (Luke 1:15.) He was with the disciples of our Lord previous to the termination of the Master's earthly ministry, enabling them to perform mighty miracles in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

The doctrine and work of the Holy Spirit are recognized in the Old Testament with increasing clearness as each succeeding economy passes away; and the general principles which characterize the dispensation of the Spirit may be traced through all the preceding ages with increasing distinctness as we approach the time of His predicted and glorious effusion upon the Church of God. Still, we should bear in mind that, however great and glorious the manifestations of the Spirit may have been at various times under the Old Testament economy, He is imparted and manifested in forms so new and so transcendent under the New Dispensation, as to render proper the statement of the Apostle John, while Jesus was yet on earth, that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39).

Certain measures of the Holy Spirit's influence had, indeed, been vouchsafed to the Church and to



the world from earliest times; but that *abundant effusion* of the Spirit, and that marvelous and full impartation of His grace and gifts foretold by the prophet Joel, and which were to mark the introduction of a new and golden era in the history of our world, could not be given until Christ was glorified. He must ascend to the Father before the Holy Ghost, the promised Comforter, could descend upon the Church. "If I go not away," said Jesus, "the Comforter will not come to you." The descent of the Spirit in the plenitude of His grace and power upon the Church was to be in consequence of Christ's completed atonement, and therefore could not precede His crucifixion. It was also to supply the place and supplement the work of Christ on earth, and to demonstrate to all the world throughout all time the resurrection, ascension, and glorification of the Son of God; therefore it was not necessary, and could not be realized, until Jesus had withdrawn His visible presence from the earth, and had "ascended up on high."

Jesus Christ alone had received the Holy Spirit in His permanent fulness prior to the day of Pentecost. "The Father gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him" (John 3:34). The principles of all the dispensations met, and blended, and coëxisted in the Son of God. He received the Spirit in all His fulness that from that fulness He might communicate unto His Church "grace upon grace." He received the Holy Spirit into His human nature as a fountain of "living water," that from that fountain He might communicate a satisfying fulness to believers in all subsequent ages. Hence it is written of Him, that,



"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37-39).

Moreover Jesus received the Holy Ghost as an *anointing* for His high priesthood, and hence it was not until He had entered upon His priestly ministry in heaven, that He could bestow the fulness of the Spirit upon believers as an *anointing* for the "holy priesthood" they were to compose. As the holy anointing oil poured upon Aaron's head for his consecration to the high priesthood under the Old Dispensation, "flowed down to the skirts of his garments" (Psalm 133), so the same anointing of the Spirit which was abundantly poured upon Jesus Christ, as the great "Head of the New Testament Church," now flows down upon the whole "body" of true believers, consecrating them as "priests unto God," and "sealing them unto the day of redemption."

And then, this manifested fulness of the Holy Spirit has been given to the Church as a *permanent* heritage, under the present economy. "I will give you another Comforter," said Jesus, "*that He may abide with you forever.*" Under the former dispensations the Spirit was given not only in limited measure, but as a temporary enduement. He came upon the prophets and the saints of old betimes, with special quickening and illumination, and dwelt with



many of them in a limited manifestation of His personality and grace. But He has come, under the present dispensation, to abide forever with all true believers, in the fulness of His illuminating, quickening, sanctifying, guiding, interceding, and empowering presence and office-work. Hence, those who live under the dispensation of the Spirit, live under an economy the glory and excellence of which surpass all preceding dispensations as meridian light exceeds the glimmering dawn. It is ours to enjoy the culminating glory of that spiritual kingdom which prophets and holy men of old beheld only in the dim and distant future, and the character of which they knew only so far as it was obscurely seen through types and shadows, and prophetic revelations which the inspired seers themselves could not fully understand. Their noonday was but feeble twilight. The lustre of our moon transcends the glory of their sun—"God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:40).



## VIII

### PENTECOSTAL EFFUSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Acts of the Apostles contain the most ancient and authentic records of primitive Christianity. The teachings of Jesus, as recorded in the four Gospels, set forth the characteristics of an ideal Church, while the Book of Acts presents us with a fitting example of the same.

The entire Church at the time of our Lord's ascension comprised only a "little flock"—less than half the number of Gideon's army in the olden time. But God is never dependent on human might or power for the accomplishment of His purposes. He can save by many or by few. Generally, He "hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1:27-29).

This was the method pursued in the founding of Christianity. After a ministry of three and a half years, Jesus Christ left only a hundred and twenty disciples all told. Nor were these selected from among the great, and wise, and honored men of the world, but rather from among "the common people,"



who always "heard Him gladly." Neither had His personal ministry among them served to rid them of their Jewish prejudices, their dulness of spiritual apprehension, their narrowness, their childish weaknesses, their foibles, and the numerous inconsistencies to which they always seemed prone until after the Day of Pentecost. A feeble army, one would naturally suppose, to go forth and plant the standard of the Cross and establish the religion of the despised and crucified Nazarene in the very centers, and to the remotest limits, of Grecian and Roman civilization. Yet this was the very work to which their Master had commissioned them; and the marvelous success with which they accomplished it, has been recorded by St. Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles.

#### SECRET OF SUCCESS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

With every civil and ecclesiastical power on earth in hostile array against the religion of the Cross, and with all the culture and refinement of Greece and Rome frowning upon and sneering at those who were the expounders and defenders of the new Faith, the unlearned and feeble few went forth on their mission, depending on His Word of promise who had said, concerning the work to which they were appointed, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And so successful was their mission, though constantly confronted and withstood by hellish opposition, that, within three score years after the crucifixion of their Master, they had unfurled the banner of the Cross and successfully planted the religion of



the Nazarene in all the principal cities of the world. Insignificant as the instrumentalities employed might have appeared to those whose views of greatness were measured by the world's standard, they accomplished, within a single generation, a work which has been regarded in all subsequent ages, as a miracle unsurpassed in the annals of the world.

The secret of the wonderful power and effectiveness which attended the labors of the first ministers of Christianity, and whereby they wrought such mighty marvels and won such unheard-of conquests, was not in any natural resources of wisdom and energy, nor the result of any gifts or acquirements of a natural kind. It consisted rather in those excellent, unutterable, and Divine gifts which were bestowed upon them with the descent and baptism of the Holy Ghost, at the never-to-be-forgotten Feast of Pentecost.

The narration of the wonderful events connected with that great inaugural day of the New Testament Church and Dispensation, is contained in the Second Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. To some parts of the inspired narrative, as there recorded, special consideration will now be given, as the apostolic doctrine concerning the Holy Ghost is largely contained therein. The record begins as follows: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and



began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

#### THE PARTICULAR SEASON

St. Luke records, as worthy of special note, that the Holy Ghost was not given until "the day of Pentecost was fully come." The appropriateness of this particular season, as that in which the glorious and full effusion of the Spirit should come upon the Church of Christ, deserves a brief consideration.

The Father keeps "the times and seasons in His own power." Accordingly there is always a fitness of season in whatever God does, as also in all His special revelations and manifestations of Himself. That "the promise of the Father" concerning the special gift of the Comforter was not fulfilled until "the day of Pentecost was fully come," is highly significant. Pentecost was a hallowed feast of the Jews, which had "preserved the most gracious and pathetic memories of Israel" through more than twenty centuries of their history. It was instituted and first celebrated just fifty days after the institution of the Passover and the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Hence its name, *πεντηκοστή*, which signifies *the fiftieth*. It was sometimes called "the feast of weeks" by the Hebrews (Exod. 34:22), because its celebration always occurred at the completion of seven full weeks from the annual Passover. Its institution was connected with the giving of the Law on Sinai, which event, in Israel's later history, it specially commemorated and celebrated. From this circumstance it afterward came to be designated



also as "the Feast of the Law." And from the fact that its celebration always occurred at the completion of the wheat harvest, at which time the first-fruits of the wheat harvest, threshed, ground, and converted into two loaves of leavened bread, were offered unto the Lord (Deut. 16:9, 10 and Lev. 23:17), it was also called "the Feast of the Harvest."

The day of Pentecost, therefore, was related to three important events which serve to increase the significance and consistency of the descent of the Comforter on that great festival occasion, to wit: the deliverance from Egypt, the giving of the Law, and the completed harvest. The inauguration of the New Dispensation, by its coincidence with this hallowed festival of the Old Economy, "touched upon the historic line of Jewish worship, yet escaped the glittering point which would have localized and debased its significance." On this memorable occasion, as also on the Passover fifty days previous, Judaism was both honored and gloriously superseded by Christianity. The paschal lamb gave place to "Christ our Passover;" and the giving of the Law to the gift of the Divine Comforter, whose gracious ministry was designed "for every nation under heaven" (Ver. 5).

There is a correspondence between the giving of the Law, which is celebrated by this feast of Pentecost, together with the crucifixion of our Lord which took place at the Passover, and the descent of the Holy Spirit which occurred at this Pentecost. (1) At the Passover the Israelites were delivered from Egyptian bondage; this was a type of the thralldom in which the human race was to sin and Satan. (2) At the Passover, Jesus Christ, who was typified by the paschal lamb, was "sacrificed" for the sin of the world, and by this sacrifice redemption from sin and Satan was pro-



cured and proclaimed. (3) On the Pentecost, God gave His Law on Mount Sinai, accompanied with thunderings and lightnings. On the Pentecost, God sent down His Holy Spirit, like "a rushing, mighty wind;" and "tongues of fire" sat upon each disciple, in order that, by His influence, the *new* law of *Light* and *Life* might be promulgated and established. Thus the analogy between the Egyptian bondage and the thralldom occasioned by sin—the deliverance from Egypt and the redemption from sin—the giving of the Law with all its emblematic accompaniments, and the sending down of the Holy Spirit, with His symbols of light, life, and power, has been exactly preserved. (4) At the Jewish Passover Christ was degraded, humbled, and ignominiously put to death: at the following festival He was highly *glorified*; and the all-conquering and ever-enduring might of His kingdom then commenced. The Holy Spirit seems to have designed all these analogies, to show that, through all the preceding ages, God had the dispensation of the Gospel in view; and that the *Old Law* and its ordinances were only designed as preparatives for the *New*.\*

The analogy may very properly be carried farther. As the feast of Pentecost was a *harvest* festival, celebrated by Israel in acknowledgment of God's dominion over their country, and by offering unto Him the first-fruits of their completed wheat harvest, in the form of two wave-loaves baked with leaven—a type of perfection—so the gift of the Holy Ghost, on this great festival occasion, was to the end that the Church of Christ might, from that day forward, present unto God "the first-fruits" of Christ's finished atonement, in the personal and complete sanctification and holiness of its members!

At the first Pentecost, the Law of God was given, engraved on tables of stone. At the memorable Jerusalem Pentecost, and by the baptism with the Holy

\*"Clarke's Commentary."



Ghost, that Law which was originally engraved on tables of stone, was written upon the minds and hearts of the disciples. To have God's law written on the heart is to attain to God's ideal of holy character. The holiness of Christ consisted in this. The following words of the Psalmist, applied in the New Testament to a description of Christ's perfect righteousness, accord with this idea: "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire: Mine ears hast Thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, *Thy law is within My heart*" (Psa. 40: 6-8).

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is God's method of writing that law on our hearts, thereby conforming us to the image and character of His Son. This is sanctification, holiness, perfection of Christian character. This is the great distinguishing promise concerning the Holy Ghost dispensation:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, *I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord. (Jer. 31: 31-34.)



St. Paul, in addressing those who were the subjects of what he terms, in contradistinction from the dispensation of the Law, "the ministration of the Spirit," says: "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart" (2 Cor. 3:2, 3). And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, after proving that the legal economy "could make nothing perfect," declares of Christ, that, "By one offering, He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified; whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; *I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them,*" etc. (Chap. 10:14-16).

In the indwelling, abiding, sanctifying, enlightening, empowering, and guiding ministry of the Comforter, the believer in Christ partakes "the first-fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:23). All these blessings are given also in proof and in consequence of Christ's resurrection and glorification "as the first-fruits of them that slept." They constitute the pledge and foretaste of the final, complete, and everlasting glorification of "them which are sanctified." How beautifully and consistently type and antitype correspond with each other, touching the dispensation of and baptism with the Holy Ghost! And how curiously and beautifully does God interweave the different dispensations of revealed religion, constructing into



majestic completeness those events which, viewed apart from their relation to the Divine purpose in Redemption, would appear only as scattered fragments of human experience and history! "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33.)

## THE CHURCH'S READINESS

The preparedness of the infant Church for the promised advent of the Comforter, is declared in the words, "They were all with one accord in one place."

1. They were all *ὁμοθυμαδὸν*, *with one accord*. The Greek word is very emphatic, and signifies a perfect concurrence of thought, purpose, affection, hope, and faith; like the concurrent tones of a well-tuned harp or organ. The "all" here mentioned, refers to the hundred and twenty disciples who were assembled at the election of Matthias. (Chapter 1:15.) These comprised the whole Christian Church at that time. They were all awaiting, in accordance with their Lord's direction, the enduement of "power from on high"—the fulfilment of "the promise of the Father"—in the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them. On this great event, their faith, their hopes, and their most ardent desires were concentrated; and, having the same end in view, the same faith, hope, and desire, they had but one prayer, which every heart uttered, and which one and all breathed forth toward heaven as the prayer of *faith*. It is not improbable, however, that, when the day of Pentecost had come, their prayers were "hushed into deep and silent heart-



breathings," and that "a period of silence and expectation in which no man had aught to say to his brother," immediately preceded the "sound from heaven," as a lull, prophetic of some sudden shock or commotion among the elements precedes the approaching cyclone, tornado or earthquake. Prayer is never mightier than when breathed with

"That speechless awe that dares not move,  
And all the silent heaven of love."

If we conceive of the hundred and twenty disciples on this occasion as awaiting, in united but silent prayer and expectation of the coming of the Comforter, we shall the more fully appreciate the contrast which was developed when they were startled by a sudden "sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind."

This being "of one accord" is an essential condition of the manifestation of the Holy Ghost, in any marked degree, among God's people to-day. The Spirit of God never comes, in Pentecost baptisms, upon a Church which is rent by strifes and divisions. Many religious societies and assemblies pray for the Holy Ghost, to which the following language of an inspired apostle might be addressed with great propriety: "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and can not obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:2, 3).

If a group of people would experience a shock from an electric battery, they must be connected with each other, as well as with the poles of the battery. The



withdrawing of a single hand breaks the current, and renders the expected thrill impossible. There is something analogous to this in the condition upon which the Holy Ghost is given. Not until the members of a Church or religious assembly are "all of one accord," can that Church or assembly receive the fulness of the Spirit's manifestation and power. This accounts for the failure of many religious services which are full of promise in the beginning. As the good work progresses, the worshipers become fervent, their faith grows strong and vigorous, their differences concerning minor matters are swallowed up in the one ardent desire for an outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and the point of absolute *accord*, which renders the enduement "with power from on high" legitimately possible, is almost reached; when, suddenly, some soul falters, or in some way breaks "the unity of the Spirit," and the meeting drops to its former level, if not to a still lower plane. We sing:

"Touched by the lode-stone of Thy love,  
Let all our hearts agree;  
And ever toward each other move,  
And ever move toward Thee."

And not until God's people are drawn together in a unity like this, will they, in any place, realize the full and glorious manifestation of the Holy Spirit in their midst.

The disciples in the "upper room" at Jerusalem had "prepared the way of the Lord." There had been disagreements and contentions among them, but these were settled before the day of Pentecost arrived. The whole company were "of one accord" on



that occasion, being united in purpose, in affection, in desire, and in faith; and when they had reached this point of agreement, the Holy Ghost came down in glorious effusion and manifestation, to meet their *united* faith and prayer. The same simple conditions, met by the Church to-day, will render the communication of the heavenly baptism legitimate and certain. But this condition of "accord," or agreement, is indispensable.

Were we to form a circle with a thousand needles and place a magnet in the center, they would all, by the attractive power of the magnet, be drawn to itself. So by the attractive power of the love of Christ must the children of God be drawn together, and all together drawn to God, if they would realize pentecostal outpourings of the Holy Spirit. Whenever, like the disciples at Pentecost, any assembly of believers are met in this spirit, they may confidently expect to be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Our Lord has said, "That if two of you shall *agree* on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:19).

2. They were all "*in one place.*" The best authorities of the present day are of the opinion that the "place" here mentioned was not the Temple, nor any room of that sacred edifice. We read in the previous chapter, that when the disciples returned from Olivet, where they had witnessed the Lord's ascension, "They went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother



of James;" and that "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren." It is highly probable that the "place" in which they were assembled on the day of Pentecost was the same "upper room" into which they entered on their return from Mount Olivet. That room was evidently an apartment of some private residence, as it was a place where all the apostles, ἦσαν καταμένοντες, were *lodging*. (Chapter 1:13.) The time for distinct separation from Judaism had come.

Already the shadow of doom lay across the temple roof; hence it was better that the living and indestructible Church should not be identified with a building marked for destruction; and yet that it should touch, rather by coincidence than by sympathy, a hallowed feast which preserved the most gracious and pathetic memories of Israel.\*

The particular locality in which our Lord's disciples were gathered on this memorable occasion is, however, of inferior importance. That which is most significant is the fact, that "they were all together in one place," as the Revised Version reads; and "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Doubting Thomas was now cured of his unbelief, and, with the rest of the apostles, waited in faith for the promised manifestation of the Holy Spirit. He had missed one blessing by being absent from the assembly of his brethren when the risen Lord was manifested unto them; he could not afford to miss another. The day of Pentecost found the apostles and the disciples of the Master "*all together*," tarrying for the enduement of power from on

\*"The Paraclete," p. 152.



high. Nor did they assemble, and wait, and pray in vain. The Spirit came, attended with symbols of light, and life, and power, and with a suddenness that surprised them all; and "*they were all FILLED*" with His presence, and endued with His grace and power.

Special Divine manifestations are promised to every assemblage of religious worshipers, however small the number, who are assembled in the name of Christ. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name," said Jesus, "there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). No Church will, as a whole, enjoy large measures of the Holy Spirit's presence and power, unless there be a frequent gathering together of its members "*in one place,*" and in Jesus' name, for the joint maintenance of spiritual fellowship and devotion. We must heed the scriptural injunction to "forsake not the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is," if we would enjoy refreshing manifestations and powerful outpourings of the Holy Ghost. But whenever the members of any religious society are gathered together, like the disciples at Pentecost,—"*with one accord,*" and "*in one place,*"—it is their privilege to expect and realize a pentecostal manifestation of the Spirit upon them, as a source of renewed inspiration and power.



## IX

### PENTECOSTAL EFFUSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT— CONTINUED

Three sensible miracles attended the descent of the Comforter on the day of Pentecost—"a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind," the appearance of "cloven tongues, like as of fire," and speaking with tongues the disciples had never learned. Each had its peculiar signification, and deserves our careful study, in order that we may know and profit by the lessons it was designed to teach.

#### THE SOUND FROM HEAVEN

This sensible manifestation of the Spirit's descent came "*suddenly.*" The disciples had been waiting in earnest expectation ten days for the advent of the promised Comforter. Yet the suddenness with which He was finally manifested was an evident surprise to the entire company. It is generally if not universally so with the operations and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. He comes with a suddenness that surprises those of strongest and most lively faith.

The suddenness of Divine appearances is expressly noted in the Scriptures [says Dr. Joseph Parker]. Thus: "The Lord spake suddenly unto Moses and Aaron;" the Lord is to come suddenly to His Temple; suddenly there was with the



angel of the annunciation a multitude of the heavenly host; and in this case [the sound of], the rushing, mighty wind came suddenly from heaven. All great events appear to come with suddenness, even when long expected and wearily waited for. When did *death* come other than suddenly, though the watchers thought themselves prepared for the solemn presence? In every line there is a climacteric point. Intellectual illumination is sudden, but intellectual education is always slow. In a moment the mind sees the vision, and is consequently tempted to describe the disclosure as sudden, how laborious soever the process of study and self-preparation. Even Archimedes felt that the wind came suddenly from heaven, and he shouted, *Eureka!* like a slave bounding from constraint into liberty. From the Divine side there can be nothing sudden. This pentecostal baptism had actually been foretold by one of the prophets of Judah. The *fact* was declared, the *hour* was concealed. Soldiers advancing to battle know that the word of command will be spoken, yet so sudden will be its utterance, that it will come upon them like a shock; they know the fact, they do not know the time. God proceeds by this method. He gives the great promise, but keeps back the hour of its fulfilment; thus: "the kingdom shall be restored to Israel, but it is not for you to know the times and seasons of the restoration: I will come to the world in Judgment, but it will be as a thief in the night; of that day and that hour knoweth no man, not even the Son; the Father alone knoweth: the Son of man will come at an hour when He is not expected." So in this case: far back in time, even when Azariah was king in Judah, the prophet had said, "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy;" and Peter claimed the scene at Pentecost as the fulfilment of these words of old. In this way men are trained to live by faith, and in this way is reserved for them the keen joy that comes of suddenness and surprise.\*

The suddenness of the Spirit's manifestation, as

\*Joseph Parker in "The Paraclete," pp. 153-155.



here recorded, may also be considered as symbolizing His *instantaneous* work in regeneration and sanctification. Regeneration is sudden. It is represented as a resurrection—a passing from death unto life in an instant. Sanctification, in its final stage, is also instantaneous, and is represented as merely a *touch* of the lips. Said the seraph who laid the live coal upon Isaiah's mouth, "Lo, this hath *touched thy lips*, and thy sin is purged, and thine iniquity is taken away" (Isa. 6:7). Even so the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire instantaneously consumes carnality, and sanctifies "the whole spirit, soul, and body."

"O that it now from heaven might fall,  
And all my sins consume;  
Come, Holy Ghost, for Thee we call,  
Spirit of burning, come."

#### THE SOUND

This sound came "from heaven." It was supernatural in its origin, hence also supernatural in its effects. It came from heaven, hence the strength and virtue of heaven were in it. It came from the throne of our exalted Lord and Savior; hence its echo back to heaven, from the Church on earth, is ever acceptable and well pleasing unto Him. Mere natural or earth-born sounds, even under the name of devotion, are powerless to influence men towards God, and are wholly wanting in that virtue which alone is pleasing to Him. The sweetest melodies and the most charming sounds of earth, reach not the ear and move not the heart of the Divine Father, unless they are begotten of an inspiration from heaven. The



time has come "when the true worshipers must worship the Father in Spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4:23).

It is further worthy of note that this first sensible manifestation of the Holy Spirit's descent was addressed to the *ear*. An eminent writer has suggested that the ear is the ground of the Word or Doctrine of the Lord, and is the organ of sense which gives the first admittance to faith. St. Paul says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The Holy Spirit began His operations here. He manifested Himself sensibly and audibly in "a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind."

The sound from heaven served first, to call in them that were without. Œcumenius is quoted as saying, "The sound pierced the ears of them that were in the city." St. Luke says, "When this sound was heard, the multitude came together" (Ver. 6, R. V.). The objection has been made, that the multitude thought ill of it when they had been drawn together. But Chrysostom has remarked, in reply: "If they said the apostles were filled with new wine when these signs occurred, what would they have said without them?" The sin of those who *will* not hear must be upon their own heads. They are like the deaf adder, which will not hearken to the voice of the charmers, charming never so wisely. (Psa. 58:4, 5.)

The sound from heaven served in the next place to demonstrate the office of them that were within. The Spirit came in an audible sound, as significant of the fact that a door of effectual utterance should thenceforth be opened to all the messengers of Christ.



Had not Jesus said unto them that, after the Holy Ghost should come upon them, they should be endowed with power from on high, and should be "witnesses" unto Him to "the uttermost part of the earth?" (Acts 1:8.) And may it not be said of them ever since the memorable day of Pentecost, "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world?" (Rom. 10:18.) The Gospel is called a "joyful sound," "good news," "glad tidings," etc. Its universal publication, therefore, was fittingly symbolized by the "sound from heaven" which fell upon the ears of the multitudes who were assembled "out of every nation under heaven."

The sound from heaven was also symbolical of the Church's confession of Christ. The predicted mission of the Paraclete is to "testify" of Christ Himself, and to empower the Church for bearing similar testimony, to the end of the dispensation. Since He has come, open confession is an immediate result of faith, even more than under the former dispensations. The Psalmist said, "I believed, therefore have I spoken." St. Paul quotes the Psalmist's saying, and adds: "We also believe, and therefore speak." Fidelity in confessing Christ is one great means of leading others to believe on Him unto their salvation. Thousands upon thousands of the early Christians proved their fidelity in this matter by nobly and dauntlessly confessing Him in the face and amid the very flames of martyrdom. Burning them for such confession augmented the power of their testimony a thousandfold. It soon became proverbial that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."



"Faith of our fathers! Holy faith!  
We will be true to thee till death."

There is also special signification in the fact that the sound from heaven resembled that of "a *rushing, mighty* wind." It has been said that, "When God declares His virtue by any sensible object, it is because of some important relation between the sign and that which it signifies." This is particularly true in the instance before us.

When Nicodemus asked Jesus concerning the *how* of the New Birth, Jesus answered: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). Thus He taught that the Spirit is mysterious and independent in His operations. After His resurrection, He "breathed" on His disciples, and said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." As "God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and he became a living soul," so Jesus "breathed on" His disciples to show that not natural life only, but also spiritual life, is given by the inspiration of the Almighty. After His ascent into heaven Jesus could physically breathe upon His disciples no more; in analogy to this, however, He sent down the promised Comforter, who came with a sound "like that of murmuring wind."

The rushing wind is also a fit emblem of the *activity* of the Holy Spirit, and of all who receive His anointing and inspiration. Of all the elements of the natural creation wind is the most active. In fact, where it is not active it does not exist. Even so the Paraclete, which is the Holy Ghost, is the most



active Being in the world. Where He is not actively manifest He does not dwell—that is, in the sense in which He is promised to all who believe in Jesus Christ.

We have seen in the chapter on the “Emblems of the Holy Spirit,” of which wind is a prominent one, that wind is a purifying agent, and is also indispensable to life. Even so it is a prominent part in the mission of the Paraclete to purify the Church and maintain its spiritual life. Without Him the most perfectly organized Church in the world soon becomes like a vast charnel house—full of corruption and death. How many such assemblies there are which will continue to resemble Ezekiel’s valley of dry bones until some one arises who, like the prophet, can effectually prophesy unto the winds, saying, “Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live!” (Ezek. 37:9.)

The particular manifestation of the Comforter which we are now considering resembled “a rushing, mighty wind,” or the sound of a cyclone or a tornado. What does this signify or typify, if not the strength and efficiency of the Holy Ghost? Air, in its undisturbed condition, is very thin and mild. But when its activity and energy are exerted how mighty are the effects! When its strength is aroused, what can stand before it? The full-rigged and well-manned vessel moves not, except the wind blow upon it; but when the spread sails are filled with the rushing wind, how majestically that same vessel rides above the billows, bearing its costly cargo to the destined port! Even so all the appliances of the Gospel and of the Church are utterly powerless until they are



energized by the Holy Ghost. Everything else may be in perfect order, but without the manifest presence and power of the Spirit there can be only failure and death. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6).

#### THE FIERY EMANATIONS

"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." We have already seen (Chapter 5) that fire is also an emblem of the Holy Spirit. Fire is illuminating, penetrating, refining, purifying, transforming. It is also a source of warmth, a minister of good cheer, a symbol of ardor, or intensity. The fiery emanations which attended the descent of the Comforter at Pentecost were eminently fitting, as symbols of the manifold offices which He came to perform within the hearts of believers. He illuminates, regenerates, guides, sanctifies, transforms, warms, cheers, and inspires with ardor and intensity those in whose hearts He dwells.

The appearance of the "cloven tongues like as of fire" was in fulfilment of John the Baptist's prediction, "He shall baptize you with \* \* \* fire." As fire had been an age-long symbol of the Divine Being, among God's covenant people, what else could they have understood by John's expression than that they should be baptized with Divinity? They were to be baptized into union with the Divine. They were to be filled and suffused with the presence of God, until their very nature should *burn* with holiness, and should reflect "the light of the knowledge of the glory



of God" as it is manifested "in the face of Jesus Christ." The burning heart, burning with fire enkindled by the Holy Spirit, has ever been the secret of all Christian evangelism—of all missionary propagandism. The baptism with the Spirit "combines a sensation of *ardor* with a Gospel of *love*." Fire is symbolical of love red-hot with enthusiasm. Love, kindled to the pitch of enthusiasm, attests the Church's true commission. The Church without it is a Church uncredentialed and without authority. The Church can be thus credentialed, however, only in so far as her individual members are "filled with the Spirit," and as a result, with love flaming up into enduring enthusiasm.

There is spiritual instruction in the fact that these fiery emanations assumed the shape of "cloven tongues."

The sign of the Holy Spirit's presence was a *tongue of fire*. It was a most suitable emblem, pregnant with meaning, and indicative of the large place which the human voice was to play in the work of the New Dispensation, while the supernatural fire declared that the unaided human voice would avail nothing. The voice needs to be quickened and supported by that Divine fire, that superhuman energy and power, which the Holy Ghost can confer. The tongue of fire pointed on that pentecostal morn to the important part in the Church's life, and in the propagation of the Gospel, which prayer, and praise, and preaching would hereafter occupy. \* \* \* The human tongue, illuminated and sanctified by fire from the inner sanctuary, was about to be the instrument of the Gospel's advancement,—not penal laws; not the sword and fire of persecution; and so long as the Divinely-appointed means were adhered to, so long the course of our holy religion was one long-continued triumph.\*

\*G. T. Stokes, D. D., in "Expositor's Bible."



In the general sense in which it is said there was "a sound of a rushing mighty wind" there was also the presence of the fiery symbols, indicative of that "glow of hallowed delight and thankfulness" which filled the hearts of the disciples, and manifested itself "by a rapt and glistening expression of countenance;" but, in addition to this, there was the outgoing power of *utterance*, or of inspired speech, given to each, indicative of the fact that the measure of unction which rested upon each disciple was received and held for the profit of others, and for the edification of the Church as a whole, as well as for his individual comfort. Each received the gift of the Spirit as a *fire*, for purposes of individual sanctification, inspiration, and consolation; but also as a *tongue* of fire, to indicate that this enduement was for the benefit of others as well as for himself. The burning heart produces burning speech.

#### THE SPEAKING WITH TONGUES

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This was no "strange and mysterious mingling of sounds of whose meaning the speakers themselves were ignorant," as appears to have been the case later at Corinth; for we are distinctly told in the narrative that Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers from Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, testified saying, "we do



hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

Much confusion has been introduced among the people of God in some quarters of the land by teachers who have failed to distinguish between the speaking with tongues at Pentecost, and the speaking with tongues in the Corinthian church at a later period. The former consisted of speaking in languages they had never learned so as to be distinctly understood by those whose vernacular it was, and that by the Holy Spirit's power; while the latter consisted in the utterance, while in a state of ecstasy, of sounds which neither the utterer nor others present could understand, except through an inspired interpreter. This gift became subject to grave abuse at Corinth, so much so that St. Paul discouraged its exercise. (1 Cor. 14:1-19.) If the scenes he describes had any connection with Pentecost, which may be reasonably doubted, "they rather," as Dr. Parker says, "suggest the decay of this power than give any idea of its original dignity and use, or sanction any attempt to recover a gift which the Lord designed to be temporary."

The pentecostal speaking with tongues was a miracle in *speech*. And as the other supernatural accompaniments of the Holy Spirit's descent were evidently symbolical of the offices the Spirit was to accomplish, why should not this be regarded as symbolical of the Spirit's agency in causing the Gospel to be proclaimed by voice and pen, and through the printed page, in all the languages of men? This gift of tongues at Pentecost served a very needful end at that time—the proclamation of the Gospel, at its



very introduction into the world, to the representatives from many parts of the world who were assembled at the feast of Pentecost, that they in turn might carry the tidings to their respective countries, thereby preparing the way for its more rapid and effectual introduction throughout the whole Roman world. In this respect also it was "a sign, a beneficent token of the sublime future." It was a sign that under the fiery baptism with the Spirit the divided languages of men should be no effectual barrier to the final conquest of all nations by the Cross. The light, the inspiration, the love which it imparts was destined to find expression in all languages, and among all nations. And is not the permanent publication of the Gospel in nearly five hundred languages of to-day, as well as its proclamation by Christian missionaries in the languages of practically every nation upon earth, a fulfilment in a large degree of what the pentecostal gift of tongues as a supernatural phenomenon signified?

Mark the very significance of this mastery of speech [says Dr. Parker]. As a matter of fact, Christianity is the universal language. This pentecostal sign was symbolical of that reality. By addressing the heart in the name of purity, love, and peace, it speaks to man in all places through all time. It speaks to the trained intellect and the untutored mind, to the old man and the little child, to every hope and every fear; it is the one speech which is self-interpreting the world over. Here, then, is the inward and spiritual grace, of which the miracle on the day of Pentecost was but the outward and visible sign. Why cry for the sign to reappear when the holy grace is manifest in our hearts? Why go in quest of the burning bush when the Holy Ghost is present in the very springs and outgoings of our life? Every departure from the spiritual line is a



movement toward the elements that are "beggarly" and useless.\*

## THE ABIDING GIFT

The striking and supernatural phenomena which accompanied the introduction of the epoch of the Spirit did not long abide. They served their purpose, and soon disappeared. The "sound from heaven," the "cloven tongues like as of fire," and the speaking "with other tongues," as signs of the Comforter's presence and office-work, passed into the background when once His presence and ministry were fully established. The real thing to which all else pointed remained. "THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST." The holy Chrism which came upon them, and entered into them, remained when the "sound from heaven" was no more heard, when the fiery tongues were no longer visible, when the universal gift of speaking in languages never learned was no longer manifest. The Master's promise regarding the Comforter was, "He shall abide with you for ever." He did abide, and still abides, and will abide for ever, with those who constitute the true Church of God. He has been installed once for all as the Church's Paraclete—her Advocate, Defender, Patron, Guide, and Sanctifier—and it is His prerogative to fulfil all these varied offices in each individual believer, "until we all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

The one thing paramount to everything else on the

\*"The Paraclete," p. 160.



day of Pentecost; the very thing which all the preceding dispensations had anticipated and prepared the way for; and also the one thing from which Christianity and the Christian Church emanated, and from which all subsequent Christian evangelism and Christian achievement of the centuries have sprung, was the *personal enthronement of the Holy Spirit within believing hearts in all His fulness, uniting all to Christ and to each other by bonds of holy love, "baptizing them into one body," constituting them also "a holy temple unto the Lord," "builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit."* The spiritual import of Pentecost in Christian experience is nothing short of being "filled with the Spirit," yea, of being "filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:19).

"O that the Comforter would come!

Nor visit as a transient guest,

But fix in me His constant home,

And take possession of my breast;

And make my soul His loved abode,

The temple of indwelling God."



## X

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE COMFORTER

The Sixteenth Chapter of St. John's Gospel records our Savior's discourse concerning the work of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter. This brief discourse is an exhaustless mine of richest truths, "bearing on the deepest questions of doctrine, and on the practical discipline of our hearts and lives." A treatise on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit would be very incomplete, should it leave the transcendent character and the glorious ministrations therein ascribed to Him unnoticed.

Turning to John 14:16, 17, we find our Savior's first promise of the Spirit as a Comforter: "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world can not receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." This was uttered to comfort His disciples who were troubled in view of His approaching departure from among them. He assured them that He would not leave them comfortless, but that, when He should have ascended into heaven, He would procure for them, through His intercession before the Father, "another Comforter"—one who would dwell in them, and who would abide forever with



them. This promised Comforter He tells them is "the Spirit of truth"—"the Holy Ghost" (Verse 25).

Then in Chapter 16: 7-15, He gives a more extended and detailed account of the mission which the Comforter should accomplish. Still speaking of His own departure He says:

But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye can not bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself: but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you.

#### THE COMFORTER

It is worthy of special notice that, in this discourse, our Lord ascribes to the Holy Spirit a title which, in its application to the third Person of the Trinity, is entirely new. He is designated as "the Comforter."

The term in the original is *παράκλητος* (*Paraclete*), which signifies, not merely one who consoles the troubled and the sorrowing, but more particularly an advocate, a helper, a defender, a counselor,



patron, mediator. In 1 John 2:1, the term is applied to Jesus Christ: "We have an Advocate [Greek, *Paraclete*] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Generally, however, this title is applied to the Holy Spirit, whose presence, influence and operations were to compensate for the departure of the visible Christ.

The Spirit is also spoken of as "*another* Comforter," to distinguish Him from Jesus, to whom the title is elsewhere applied, and whom He was to succeed in His ministry among men, as the great promised blessing of the New Dispensation. He is the invisible, indwelling, and abiding Advocate and Helper of believers, to procure whose manifestation Jesus Christ, the outward and visible Paraclete, withdrew Himself from earth and ascended up on high.

#### TWO PARACLETES OR COMFORTERS

The believer in Christ, therefore, has now two Paracletes, Advocates, Comforters—Jesus Christ, who represents him as his Advocate in heaven, maintaining his cause before the Father; and the Holy Spirit, who dwells within him here, aiding, teaching, guiding, consoling him, revealing the things of Christ, and making intercession for him according to the will of God. It was expedient for the outward and visible Paraclete to be withdrawn, that He might be succeeded by the invisible, indwelling, and abiding Paraclete.

It must well nigh have staggered the faith of the disciples when Jesus said unto them, "It is expedient



for you that I go away," etc. They could not understand how that could be. Had they not enjoyed an intercourse and communion with Christ, the blessedness of which was beyond comparison with any fellowship between man and man? Forsaking all that they had to follow Him, did they not find more than all in Him? Had He not gathered them beneath the wings of His love, and, as a loving and faithful Guardian, sheltered them from the rage of their adversaries, given them aid and consolation in every time of need, ministered relief from every burden of care and trouble, and provided for them an abundant supply at all times for every want of body and soul, of mind and heart? Had He not with "gracious words" instructed them in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven? Had He not, when they were hungering in the wilderness, exerted His Deity, and, by miracle, provided bread to supply their wants, and with which they were able to supply the famishing multitudes? Had He not also given them that spiritual bread which would nourish and strengthen their own souls, and with which they should be able to minister spiritual sustenance to others? Had He not, in answer to their cry for deliverance, when tossed and threatened by an angry sea, calmed the raging tempest by His omnipotent word, and hushed their troubled spirits into peace? Had they not found in Him a fulness of truth and grace, of wisdom, peace, and love? And more than this, had they not found Him to be the fulness of God abiding with them, and talking with them face to face, bearing patiently with their infirmities, kindly reproofing and correcting their perversities, faithfully warning them



of their dangers, kindly lifting them up when through weakness they had fallen, ever strengthening their hearts, pouring heavenly light into their understanding, lifting their aspirations heavenward, and guiding their footsteps onward in the way of life eternal? How, then, could it be expedient or profitable for them that He should withdraw Himself from the world, and leave them exposed to the dangers, evils, and sorrows which He had assured them would soon come upon them?

## BETTER THAN THE BODILY PRESENCE OF JESUS

No wonder that they were sorrowful when He said unto them: "A little while and ye shall see me no more." Nor is it strange that their faith wavered in that hour. It was to strengthen and confirm their faith, and to afford "strong consolation" in the extreme trial then coming upon them, that He addressed to them the language we are now considering. "Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your hearts. *Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away,*" etc. In these utterances the sorrowing disciples of our Lord were assured that His departure, painful as the separation might be to them, would be for their spiritual and eternal advantage, inasmuch as it would procure for them the ministry of "another Comforter," who should not only be *with* them, but should dwell *in* them as their abiding Teacher, Guide, and Sanctifier.

It should be borne in mind that our Lord's promise to send the Paraclete or Comforter, after His own



departure, had special reference to the manifestation of the Holy Spirit as the permanent, indwelling *Sanctifier* of believers. It was not spoken with reference to the preliminary work of the Spirit in their awakening and conversion, nor did it refer to the testimony which He bears with the spirits of all who are justified by faith, as to their sonship in the family of God.

The witness of the Spirit to the sonship of believers should not be confounded with the sanctifying baptism of the Holy Ghost. The former is only the initial office-work of the Comforter, while the latter is the crowning glory of the kingdom of God—the perfecting of the believer in the image of his Lord. The Spirit of God was already with the disciples of Jesus; and they had the assurance that their names were written in heaven. (Luke 10:20.) In the power of the Holy Ghost they had cast out devils, and wrought divers miracles. Hence, in the first promise concerning the gift of the Comforter, Jesus said unto them: “The world knoweth Him not; but ye know Him: for He dwelleth *with* you, and shall be *in* you” (John 14:17). The Holy Ghost, who was already with them, when manifested as the Paraclete or Comforter would enthrone Himself within their hearts, as their personal Sanctifier. Thus were they to be made “an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

The Spirit of God has wrought upon the hearts of men in every age of the world. He strove with the corrupt and incorrigible antediluvian race. He changed the hearts and inspired the faith of godly men of old. He was “grieved” and “vexed” by rebel-



lions Israel, whom He ever sought to win to a proper allegiance to Jehovah. During all the successive epochs of Old Testament history He was operating throughout the world, silently and secretly influencing the hearts of all those who did not deliberately surround themselves with impenetrable barriers. But all this was before that personal advent and manifestation of the Spirit to the world of which our Savior speaks in the discourse now under consideration, and which constitutes the distinguishing glory and excellence of the New Dispensation.

Jesus Christ was on earth, manifesting Himself in various ages and places, and in divers ways, during those economies which preceded His personal advent as the long-predicted Messiah. He appeared to Abraham, to Isaiah, to Ezekiel, to Daniel, to the Hebrew children, and to many of the saints of olden time.

“In the fulness of time,” however, He was manifested among men in a sense in which He had not been revealed before—in the fulness and distinctness of His Personality. Even so, the Spirit of God, though He has always been operating on the hearts of men, and manifesting His presence betimes to the devout and pious, is manifested under the present economy as He was not manifested to the sons of men in any previous age. Now the Holy Ghost is “given” in a sense in which He could not have been manifested until Christ was glorified. In the manifestation of His distinct Personality, and in the fulness of His gracious operations and communications, He now makes His perpetual residence within “the body of Christ, which is the Church,” by dwelling in the hearts of individual believers, who are thereby



“builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22). “He shall be *in* you,” was the distinguishing characteristic of our Lord’s first promise concerning the personal manifestation of the Comforter. Accordingly, when this promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, the disciples “*were all filled with the Holy Ghost.*”

The gift of the Holy Spirit as an indwelling Sanctifier, therefore, is the distinguishing glory of that dispensation which was inaugurated at Pentecost, and to which our Lord referred, when He said, “If I depart, I will send the Comforter unto you, which is the Holy Ghost.” This manifestation of God to human consciousness in the Person of the indwelling Paraclete, is the priceless, peerless gift of heaven—the chief glory of the Gospel—the very climax of revealed religion!

This epoch and reign of the Spirit is the glory which prophets and righteous men of old desired to see, but which they were permitted to behold only in the distant, and faintly glimmering dawn, “God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

#### GIVES A SUPERIOR CONCEPTION OF CHRIST AND HIS KINGDOM

The gift of the indwelling Paraclete is better than the visible presence of Jesus, because it gives us more exalted conceptions of the Redeemer of men and of the kingdom of God, and also disciplines us to “walk by faith and not by sight.” This is clearly illustrated in the experiences of the immediate disciples



of our Lord. While Jesus was with them they knew Him chiefly "after the flesh," being knit to Him in the bonds of mere human sympathy and affection. They "trusted that it was He which should have redeemed Israel," but they looked for a restoration of the earthly kingdom, rather than for a spiritual redemption. Jesus had plainly said unto them, "My kingdom is not of this world;" yet they entertained only carnal ideas concerning it, while He continued with them. The faith they were called to exercise while He abode on earth, "was not a faith in one who was absent, but in One who was always by their side, whom they saw with their eyes, and heard with their ears, and who was daily working visible wonders before them." Hence their faith wavered and failed when He was temporarily out of their sight. When He was alone on the mountain, their lack of faith made them powerless to cast out the demon from the lad who was brought and laid helpless at their feet. While the Master slept, amid the storm on Lake Gennesaret, they were filled with terror. When He was apprehended in the garden, "they all forsook Him and fled." When He was crucified, their hopes expired; and when the women, who hastened to His sepulchre at early dawn on the morning of His resurrection, brought tidings to the apostles that the Lord was risen, "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not" (Luke 24:11).

Notwithstanding the manifestations of His Divine attributes which they had so often witnessed, their faith had regard to Him as a *man*, though of superior wisdom, power, and love, rather than as "over all,



God blessed forevermore." But when Jesus had ascended, and the Comforter was given, how changed was all this! Then they knew and boldly testified that "God had made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ." Then they knew Him—"not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

It is for the good of a child that the immediate oversight and guardianship of parents, and the outward helps and supports by which he is guided and upheld in his tender years, should be withdrawn as he approaches maturity, that he may learn thereby to exercise faith in that which is invisible, and may be disciplined to a more noble manhood and a more perfect life. Even so it was expedient for our Lord's disciples, that He whom they had trusted and followed as an earthly Master, should withdraw Himself and ascend into heaven, that their faith might be raised from a visible to an invisible Object, their service of an earthly Master be transformed into obedience to a heavenly Father, and their love and reverence for One whom they expected soon to assume regal pomp and sway a worldly sceptre, be exalted into loving, spiritual devotion to a heavenly King—to the same Lord, exalted and glorified, as "the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible."

Jesus in no wise undervalued the light and privileges enjoyed by the disciples under His own ministry. On one occasion "He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them: and to



hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Luke 10: 23, 24). Still, what they had seen and heard in the visible presence of Christ, was only preparatory for the superior light, the more excellent glory, the full and perfect blessedness, they were to receive and enjoy under the ministration of the Paraclete. When Jesus should be glorified in His ascension, the Spirit would glorify Him in their minds and hearts. He would "testify of Christ." He would "take of the things of Christ and show them unto them." Accordingly, when the Holy Ghost was given at Pentecost, such a revelation of Christ broke on the spiritual vision of those who awaited His descent as they could not have conceived before. They now "knew Christ after the flesh no more." The mystery concerning Him, and by which they had been so frequently awed when He was with them, was solved. He was God as well as Man. Now they knew Him, not as a mere man, but as "over all, God blessed forevermore."

Moreover, all those important utterances of the Savior, which had formerly been dark and enigmatical to their minds, now received a spiritual illumination and exposition, which revealed their true relation to the great purpose for which He had been manifested among men. Thus were they put in actual, conscious possession of that "eternal life" which consists in "*knowing* the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent" (John 17: 3). Nor could they know Him, only in an inferior sense, until the Holy Ghost was given.

And does not substantially the same evangelical order still prevail? Is it not generally the case,



that, in the incipient stages of Christian experience, the mind is chiefly occupied with the beauty, excellence, and perfection of Christ's human character? How forcibly are we impressed by His superior wisdom and goodness, His matchless purity, meekness, patience, gentleness and love! How great the admiration excited in our minds by His unwearied, self-forgetful, self-sacrificing activity and devotion! How delightful the study of His life, and the contemplation of all these active and passive graces which made that life so transcendently and transparently grand and beautiful! We dwell more on the human than on the Divine side of Christ's character—more on what He *was* in His humiliation, than on what He *is* in His exaltation and glory. We regard Him as a perfect ideal of human virtue, rather than as the "one Mediator between God and men" and as "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." And when we call to mind the scenes of Calvary, in which "Christ our Passover [was] sacrificed for us," is it with a vivid consciousness that He died for our sins? Is it not rather with thoughts and emotions similar to those produced by recalling the death-scene of some illustrious hero or martyr?

How much does this state resemble that of the disciples while Jesus was with them in the flesh! And as it was expedient for them that the visible Christ should depart, in order that, by the coming of the invisible and abiding Comforter, their faith should be lifted to that which was invisible, spiritual, glorious, and eternal, so it becomes necessary that the *Man* Christ Jesus, as a mere ideal of human



virtue, as "the fairest among the sons of men" and the One "altogether lovely," should pass away from our minds, in order that, by the inward teaching and illumination of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ may be so transfigured in our conceptions of Him as to become our God, as well as our Redeemer, and our Savior.

This wonderful and glorious transformation is wrought in the soul by the sanctifying baptism of the Holy Ghost. With the reception of that, comes such a revelation of the *Divine* Christ to the soul, such a demonstration of the resurrection and glorification of the Son of God, as utterly banishes all carnal ideas concerning Him, removes the last vestiges of sensuous religion from the heart, and fills the soul with a spirit of adoring reverence for Christ akin to that of seraphs before His throne. It is in this sense that "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." But those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost as an indwelling Paraclete can say, with St. Paul, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more" (2 Cor. 5:16).

It is the mission of the indwelling Comforter to reveal the glorified Christ to the souls of believers to the end that "we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," may be "changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). "He shall glorify Me," said Jesus, "for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." This fuller revelation of Christ and of God in Christ; this complete



demonstration to believers in all succeeding ages, of a finished redemption wrought out for them; this full and effectual application of redemptive grace to their individual hearts and lives by the agency of the Holy Spirit; shows us, to some extent, the expediency of Christ's withdrawment of His personal, visible presence from the world, and wherein the presence and ministry of the indwelling Spirit are of greater advantage to the Church of God than the continued bodily presence of Jesus without the indwelling Comforter could have been.

SECURES A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUAL  
THINGS

The presence of the indwelling Comforter secures to believers in Christ *a clearer understanding of spiritual things* than the continued visible presence of Jesus could have imparted.

By nature men are in a state of spiritual darkness. "Darkness covereth the earth and gross darkness the people." Nor is this the worst phase of the case; for men are not only *in* darkness, but they *are* darkness. "Ye *were* sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8). Such is St. Paul's description of the spiritual state of the unregenerate. The natural man may be possessed of a high order of intellectual life and ability, the most thorough culture the curriculum of the schools can give, and a vast store of that wisdom to deal with the daily problems of life which comes from a long, practical experience in human affairs; yet he is in a state of total blindness to those things which belong to the spiritual world



and to the spiritual life. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2: 14).

It is impossible to educate men out of their spiritual blindness and darkness. Nor does conversion bring entire deliverance from it, though it begets, in some degree, an understanding of the mysteries of grace. Conversion introduces the soul into a state of spiritual childhood—a state in which spiritual life and spiritual perceptions are begotten and manifested. But in this state the soul's conceptions of spiritual things are more or less crude and imperfect, and are intermixed with many carnal views and ideas. The attendance of the disciples upon the ministry of our Lord for the space of three years failed to remove this grossness and darkness from their minds. They were not able, at the time when Jesus delivered His last discourse unto them, to receive what He desired to teach them. Hence, it was left for the Spirit, who was to succeed and supplement the earthly ministry of Jesus, to complete the work of spiritual illumination, and instruction which He had begun. "I have yet many things to say unto you," said Jesus, "but ye can not bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16: 12, 13).

Accordingly, when the Comforter came He began His work of teaching where Christ left off at the termination of His ministry; and, taking the words of Christ—"the letter" of the Gospel—which they so little understood, He revealed them to their understanding, making them words of light and life



within them. Jesus taught them the *Word* of truth, the Paraclete revealed to them *the Truth itself*—truth in its spiritual nature and significance.

The Holy Ghost is the great and the only infallible *Interpreter of Scripture*. His ministry is not primarily to enlighten men in the truths of science, in the operations of natural law, in metaphysics, nor in the minor concerns of life; but rather to “open the eyes of their understanding” to the things that pertain to the kingdom of God—to enable them rightly to apprehend the truth contained in the oracles of God. St. Peter declares that “No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation;” and assigns as a reason for the statement which is at once philosophical and satisfactory, that “the prophecy came not in the olden time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:20, 21). Since the Word of revelation “came not by the will of man,” it can not be comprehended and explained by the mere exercise of man’s volition and intellect. As man was only instrumental in receiving and declaring the inspired Word, so he can be only instrumental in its correct interpretation. As men “were moved by the Holy Ghost” to utter the Word of the Lord, so they must be moved by the same Divine Agent, in order to comprehend and realize its import.

Literal criticism and exposition of the Scriptures are not to be dispensed with or ignored. Nor should the importance of intellectual training as a preparation for the study and exposition of God’s Word be lightly esteemed. The Divine oracles are given us through a literal medium, and, from the peculiari-



ties of its literary structure, the Bible, above all other books, needs exposition. Let it be borne in mind, however, that the best available literary instruments, and the employment of the ablest literary criticism, can give but secondary and imperfect help to an understanding of the inspired Book. That which is merely literal may be interpreted by letters; but, as the human body is inhabited by a spirit which no organ of sense can discern, so the "letter" of God's Word is but the outward symbol or expression of those spiritual truths which it embodies, and which are only "spiritually discerned."

To discover the spirit and purpose of the Scriptures and to give expression to the same by a life of daily conformity thereto, is the best possible use we can make, the best interpretation we can give of the written revelation God has entrusted to the race. But this discovery of its spirit and purpose is conditioned upon pursuing its study in a temper which is consonant with the scope of the Book—upon a spiritual preparedness which the Holy Ghost alone can produce.

A reader going to the Bible in a self-sufficient and self-dependent spirit [says Dr. Joseph Parker] will narrow it down by private interpretation and probably bring from its perusal nothing higher than a crotchet; but, going to it in another spirit, he may see it and know it as a revelation from heaven.

What then is that other Spirit? It is so specifically defined by an apostle as to prevent all doubt of its meaning. It is "the Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind;" and this Spirit is the direct gift of God! He who is thus qualified can make no vital mistakes in the interpretation of Scripture; while he who has every other qualification but



this will never apprehend the genius and purpose of the Bible.\*

The Spirit of God adds nothing to what is already revealed in the Scriptures, nor does He add any new faculties to the soul. He throws the beams of His celestial light on what is written, and purges the soul from all that would obstruct and blur its vision, thus enabling the devout reader, the man who studies the Scriptures in quest of God, to discern therein "the beauty of the Lord," and to apprehend the mind and purpose of their Divine Author. The fullest apprehension of the oracles of God can not be realized in the absence of that spiritual purity and sensitiveness which result alone from the sanctifying baptism of the Holy Ghost. And not until the Church of God has measured up to her exalted privileges in this respect, will the profoundest exposition of Divine revelation be given to the world.

When the film is removed from the eye the physician does not add a new function to the eye, but purifies it. When the telescope shows us distant worlds, it does not add new stars; it draws aside the vail and shows us what God has created. So the Holy Ghost does not create a new power in the soul, but removes the film—purges and glorifies that which is already in the soul. Not a new verse does he add to the revealed will of God, but takes the Word of God already existing, and gives a clearness and distinctness to what had previously been existing through the ages. \* \* \* Those men at Pentecost had nothing added to or taken from; but they had a better understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures than ever before, though they had been with Incarnate Deity.†

This sanctifying, illuminating agency of the in-

\*"The Paraclete," pp. 83, 84.

†Dr. G. D. Watson.



dwelling Comforter is the Divine safeguard against the numerous perils which would otherwise attend the entrusting of the Scriptures to the perusal of the unlearned—the key which enables the plain man, the uncultured but reverent student of God's Word, to unlock its hidden treasures of wisdom, truth, and grace, to lay hold upon and enrich himself with its most comforting promises, to penetrate the deeper meaning of its numerous prophecies, and to take a firmer grasp upon the rock of Bible truth than the most cultured students of Scripture who have not experienced the baptism with the Holy Spirit. This is "the anointing which abideth," and which "teacheth" those who receive it "of all things" (1 John 2:27), and without which those who apply themselves to the most critical study of the Divine oracles can not discern their true spirituality.

"I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. 11:25, 26).



## XI

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE COMFORTER—CONTINUED

#### A HIGHER DEGREE OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

The gift of the indwelling Comforter secures to the believer in Christ a higher degree of spiritual knowledge than the personal ministry of Jesus could have imparted without the Comforter.

Understanding and knowledge are not the same, though they are closely related. The former is an intellectual perception or apprehension of what is communicated to the mind; while the latter, in its highest sense, is a matter of consciousness. We may know what we understand, but we do not always understand that which we know. I can understand the principles of mathematics, or of astronomy, or of chemistry, or of botany; that is, I can grasp those principles with a clear intellectual perception, through the medium of previous analysis, or reasoning. Also, in a limited and inferior sense, I may be said to know them. But the knowledge I have of my own existence, and of my own mental operations and exercises, is a matter of conscious realization, independent of any previous analysis or course of reasoning. These are things which I know, but which I can not understand. I can never understand God, in the sense of comprehending His nature and attributes; but I may know God, in the revelation or manifesta-



tion of His Person and grace to my spirit or consciousness. The Bible teaches us that no one can, "by *searching*, find out God;" and yet it teaches that we may *know* God, and that we *must* know Him in order to be saved.

A vivid intellectual apprehension of moral and religious truth does not, of itself, constitute one a religious person, or a Christian. St. Paul supposes the case of one who can "understand all mysteries," and yet is wanting in the chief essential of Christian character. (1 Cor. 13:2.) Jesus said: "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3). The New Testament everywhere insists on a knowledge of God and of spiritual truth as the essence of pure religion. "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17). "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). "We know that we have passed from death unto life," etc. (1 John 3:14). "Now we have received not the spirit which is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:12). "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5:20).

But spiritual things are spiritually discerned. We can not know God and the things of God through sensation, nor by any process of induction or of logical reasoning. "God is a Spirit," and we can only know Him in and through that part of our nature



which most resembles Him—our spirit. We acquire a knowledge of material things through our sensibilities. We know innumerable other things, undiscoverable by the senses, through the medium of the rational faculty. But there is a vast range of truth, which lies beyond the cognition of the senses and of the intellect, and yet, which is so adapted to our consciousness, that we may know it as certainly as we know our own existence, or the unity of our own being. Back of the sensibilities, and back of the intellect, “There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding” (Job 32:8). In this central part of our being we know, not by sensation, nor by any rational process, but *by intuition*. It is in this way that we know our own existence, the operations of our own minds, and the whole class of axiomatic truths. Purely spiritual truth can be known in no other way. Hence it is written in the Scriptures: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him; but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit which is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might *know* the things which are freely given to us of God: which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth



not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:9-16).

## WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

When the Paraclete comes to dwell in us He takes up His residence in our spiritual nature, and manifests His presence and makes His revelations in our consciousness. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself" (1 John 5:10). "The Spirit Himself beareth witness [not with our sensibilities, nor with our intellect, but] with our *spirit* [consciousness] that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). The Holy Ghost does not begin His operations "at our finger-ends," nor make His revelations through the rational faculties; but He penetrates the very center of our being, and, in our consciousness, makes manifest the things of God. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined *in our hearts*, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

The following borrowed illustration is to the point:

In the old tabernacle there was the outside court for the sacrifices, hemmed in by a curtain, but it was open to the sunshine and the rain. That represents our physical nature, which is at the play of Nature's forces. In beyond the first veil, was the sanctuary with the table of shew-bread, and the golden candlestick, where the lamps were kept burning night and day. That lamp may be considered as representing the mind, the laws of human instruction, mental beliefs and reasonings. But beyond the second veil was the Holy of Holies. Nothing was allowed there, so far as light was



concerned, but the blazing light of the Shekinah. A thick covering of badger-skins kept out sunlight and lamplight, and if God did not shine there, there was nothing but total darkness. Now our spirit is reached only by the Holy Spirit. The powers of the mind can never illuminate the heart; unless God shines within our spirits they must remain in total darkness. So when the Holy Ghost makes His advent, He penetrates through the body and through the mind, and enthrones Jesus in the heart. And there, from within the spirit, He shines out through the mind and body.\*

The Holy Ghost, when manifested as the indwelling Comforter, fills the soul with a consciousness of Christ's Divinity. We believe on Him as Divine in the incipient stage of Christian experience; but not until the sanctifying baptism of the Spirit is received, does this object of our faith become a matter of assurance, or knowledge. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12:3). The disciples believed their Master when He said unto them, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," and when He declared unto them, "I and My Father are one." They never KNEW Him in these respects, however, until baptized with the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost. It was in reference to this that Jesus had said: "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (John 14:20). Accordingly, in his first discourse delivered under the baptism of the Holy Ghost, we hear St. Peter giving utterance to words like these: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Peter could not have preached like that before the

\*Dr. G. D. Watson.



day of Pentecost. The baptism of the Spirit enthrones Jesus in the heart, and begets within it a blessed, comforting consciousness of His Divinity.

#### EFFICACY OF THE ATONEMENT

Moreover when the Holy Ghost is given, as the indwelling Comforter, He reveals the full virtue and efficacy of the *Atonement* as a cure for sin. He makes us conscious that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Trusting in the blood of Christ as the meritorious ground of salvation, and accepting and appropriating it as all-sufficient for our sanctification, the Holy Spirit comes and seals on our consciousness the fulfilment of our faith, enabling us to know that we are "cleansed from all unrighteousness."

#### DIVINE PROVIDENCE

The ministry of the indwelling Comforter also transfigures the teachings of the Bible on the subject of Divine Providence into absolute certainty within the soul. He who is "filled with the Spirit" will have a blessed consciousness of God's special providence attending him in all his ways. When the prophet Elisha was at Dothan the king of Syria sent horses and chariots to compass Dothan by night. Elisha's servant, arising early in the morning, was terrified at the sight, and cried, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Elisha, confident and unmoved, replied, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them;" and then prayed: "Lord, open his eyes



that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings 6: 8-18).

The defenses of God's people, though invisible to the natural eye, are nevertheless innumerable, and mightier than all their foes. What we need is to have our "eyes opened" to see our spiritual defenses. The baptism of the Holy Ghost accomplishes this, and gives the soul a realizing sense that the same retinue of spiritual hosts by which Elisha was protected and delivered is the protection and power of deliverance for all God's people to-day. "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Psa. 91: 11, 12). And again: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Psa. 34: 7). Also Jehovah declares that He "will be a wall of fire round about His people, and the glory in their midst" (Zech. 2: 5). He who knows the Holy Ghost as an indwelling Paraclete can lay hold upon all this class of Scripture promises and declarations, in the "full assurance of faith." Amid the ever changing vicissitudes of life he reposes on His Word, who hath said, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered," with sweet composure, even as a babe reposes on its mother's bosom. It was this which enabled Paul to say, with utmost confidence: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8: 28).

The heart that is purified by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost sees God in everything, and rejoices in



the confidence that a special Divine Providence lays all things, whether prosperous or adverse in mere human estimation, under contribution to its spiritual and everlasting good. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, yea, all those events and experiences which worldly men consider calamitous, instead of being accounted evils, by him who has the indwelling Comforter, are regarded rather as ministers of imperishable blessing. It is this which enables the soul to "glory in tribulations," to "count it all joy when he falls into divers temptations," to "rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks."

## IMMORTALITY

The Holy Ghost as an indwelling Comforter fills the heart with assurance in regard to *the future life*. The resurrection of the dead is as much a certainty to him who is filled with the Spirit as though it were already past. Heaven is as real to such a one as though he had been dwelling amid its spiritual glories and its sinless saints and seraphs for a thousand years. He *now* tastes, not only "the good Word of God," but also "the powers of the world to come;" and realizes the beginning of that eternal life which consists in "knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent."

The indwelling Spirit is the prophecy and pledge of our resurrection and glorification. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in



you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:10, 11). The Spirit that now dwelleth in us, as our personal Sanctifier, is the very same Spirit that raised Christ's body from the dominion of death, and by which the bodies of all that sleep in Him shall at last be raised, glorious and immortal.

The same inspired writer also calls the indwelling Comforter the earnest, ἀρραβὼν ("*fastening penny*"), pledge, assurance, foretaste of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession. (Eph. 1:14.) By the gift of the Paraclete God confirms to our hearts the promise of a heavenly inheritance, and puts us in possession, to some extent, of the glory and blessedness of that celestial land where our inheritance is reserved for us, while we continue to tabernacle in the flesh. In this way does God assure us of "the glory which shall be revealed in us" when Christ shall be manifested in His glory. It is this assurance which enables us to account "the sufferings of this present time" as only a "light affliction, which is but for a moment," and which will issue in "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 'Twas this sustained the martyrs while the flames consumed their bodies, and which enabled them, not only to endure, but to triumph gloriously in the midst of the fire. 'Twas this supported Paul in all the sufferings he endured for the Gospel's sake; and which enabled him to say, in the face of stripes, imprisonment, beatings, perils on land and sea, in the city and in the wilderness, by robbers and among false brethren, in the experience of weariness and



painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, and in constant anticipation of a martyr's death—"none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

## A SUPERIOR ENDUEMENT OF POWER

The gift of the indwelling Paraclete is a source of greater spiritual *power* than the visible ministry of the Lord Jesus without the Comforter could have bestowed.

Just before He led the disciples out to Bethany to witness His ascension, Jesus said unto them: "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued *with power from on high*" (Luke 24:49). This promised enduement with power had reference to the gift of the Holy Ghost as the indwelling Comforter, and received its fulfilment on the day of Pentecost, when the hundred and twenty disciples, who had tarried in Jerusalem according to the command of Jesus, "were all filled with the Holy Ghost." In proof of this it is only necessary to cite the more extended statement of the same event as related by St. Luke, in Acts 1:4-9:

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but *ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost* not many days hence.



When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. *But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:* and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The enduement of power promised in the foregoing Scriptures does not have special reference to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, such as miracle-working, prophecy, speaking with tongues, etc., though the first fulfilment of the promise was accompanied by miraculous phenomena. Those particular gifts of the Comforter which the Church of later times has commonly designated as "extraordinary," had been imparted to the apostles of our Lord previous to His crucifixion; and had also previously been exercised by them. Jesus had empowered them to "raise the dead, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and cast out devils" in His name. But while they were already in possession of these wonderful *gifts* of the Spirit, He now promises them that which is vastly better, namely, the *Giver Himself*, even the Holy Ghost, as an abiding Presence within them. Hence the words: "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you;" or, more literally, as in the margin, "the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you."

That the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were peculiarly necessary to the apostles [says Mr. Fletcher], and that they were actually put in possession of such gifts, we readily allow. But, at the same time, we consider those gifts as en-



tirely distinct from the Spirit Himself. When the Spirit of grace takes full possession of a particular person, He may, if the edification of the Church requires it, bestow upon that person some extraordinary gift in an instantaneous manner, as a prince who honors a subject with an important commission invests him with sufficient power for the execution of such commission. But the gifts of a prince do not always demonstrate his actual presence; since it is very possible for a prince to lodge with one of his subjects upon whom he has conferred no special favor, while he makes a magnificent present to another, whom he has never condescended to visit in person.

Thus the Holy Spirit descended upon Mary the mother of Jesus, together with several other holy women, as well as upon all the apostles, with whom they continued in earnest supplication and prayer; nevertheless, it does not appear that any one of them received even the gift of tongues. On the other hand, we are well assured that many persons, who never received the Spirit of holiness, were yet outwardly distinguished by several extraordinary *gifts* of the Holy Ghost.

Mr. Fletcher then cites the cases of Saul, the first king of Israel, Jonah the prophet, Baalam and Judas, who, though "they never fully experienced that happy estate which the meanest among the primitive Christians was permitted to enjoy," were nevertheless favored with extraordinary or miraculous gifts. In conclusion he says:

When, therefore, we assert that every sincere believer is a temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 6:19), it is not to be understood by such expression that they have received the power of working miracles; since in this sense St. Paul himself was not always replenished with the Spirit. But it should be understood that the same Spirit of humility, of zeal, of faith, and of charity, which so eminently dwelt in Christ, continually flows from Him to the meanest of His



spiritual members, as the sap is known to pass from the trunk of a vine into the least of its branches. (John 15:5).\*

The enduement of power, then, is not an impartation *from* the Holy Ghost, not an investiture of human nature with any Divine attribute, nor a lodgment of some miracle-working ability with believers in Christ; although it may be accompanied and demonstrated by extraordinary physical signs. It is rather that personal advent, enthronement, and manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer, which is likened to the life of the vine dwelling in the branches, and which is effectual to quicken, sanctify, energize, and empower the soul for the high and important responsibilities of the Christian's calling. The Holy Ghost is called "the Spirit of power," and it is the gift of the Holy Ghost HIMSELF which constitutes that enduement of power which is the priceless legacy of Jesus Christ to His Church. He whose heart is indwelt by the Comforter can at all times say, "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin" (Micah 3:8).

#### INTELLECTUAL QUICKENING

The baptism of the Holy Ghost quickens and stimulates the natural faculties of him who receives it, and thus becomes a source of greatly increased and of wholly sanctified human power. When the Holy Ghost is given to the believer, He touches every faculty of his nature, and brings out every latent capa-

\*"Portraiture of St. Paul."



bility. When the prophet Elisha would restore the dead child of the Shunammite to life, "He went up and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm" (2 Kings 4:34). As life came to the child from the prophet's touch, so the Holy Ghost, touching every part of our human nature, quickens the entire man into an intensity of life which vastly augments his ability for usefulness. How the baptism of the Spirit quickens the perceptions of the believer! How it intensifies the intellectual life! What expansion it gives to all the moral powers! How it refines the sensibilities! How it deepens human sympathy! In short, how it quickens and develops the whole man, and puts human nature at its very best for the service of God! How a pentecostal baptism on the Church brings to light and utilizes for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, talents that had long been buried, and which otherwise would have remained forever hidden and useless!

Without their Pentecost anointing the "unlearned" fishermen of Galilee would never have accomplished those wondrous deeds which have immortalized their names and rendered them so familiar to men of every succeeding age. But for this, Luther the monk, would never have been known in history as Luther, the great Reformer; Bunyan would never have produced a *Pilgrim's Progress*; Moody would never have become a world-renowned evangelist; and many others who have won celebrity as philanthropists, reformers, and evangelists, and whose consecrated



lives have conferred a lasting heritage of blessing upon the world, would have remained in obscurity, or have become as renowned for infamy as they now are for virtuous and glorious accomplishments.

It is said that the sun has never shone on the north side of the Alps. Hence, only ferns and such vegetation as seeks the shade, can grow there. But on the south side, flourishing in the sunlight, are rich gardens and beautiful vineyards yielding delicious fruits. Could the Alps be transferred to the torrid zone and stretched along the equator, the sun's rays would fall perpendicularly upon them, and on all sides would be equal light and equal warmth. Then, as fruitful vineyards would flourish on the north side as on the south. There are many Christian people who are only partially sanctified, who have many faculties that have never been touched and energized by the fiery contact of the Holy Ghost. They have some love and zeal; they manifest a goodly degree of activity in the Master's cause; they bear some fruit; but, alas! there are within them so many torpid faculties! The baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire would bring these into lively exercise, thereby increasing greatly their ability for usefulness. What such persons need is to migrate from the temperate zone on to the equatorial line of a pentecostal consecration, where the baptism of fire can fall upon them, consuming whatever would hinder their usefulness, and calling every latent faculty into most vigorous and fruitful exercise.



## XII

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE COMFORTER—CONTINUED

#### PERSONAL HOLINESS

Another element of spiritual power in those who are inhabited by the Holy Ghost is that of personal holiness. A holy life is a wonderful power in the world for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. It preaches more effectually than the most eloquent language unaccompanied by a sanctified life. It has been often and truly said that "Purity is power." He who is made pure in heart by the indwelling Comforter will have power with God and with men. When Jacob, after his night-long struggle, prevailed over an unsanctified nature, the angel of the Lord changed his name to Israel, saying, "For as a prince thou hast power with men and with God, and hast prevailed." When the Holy Ghost is enthroned in the human heart as a personal Sanctifier, the spiritual weakling at once becomes a prince with God. Then the feeble one becomes as David, and he that is like David, as the angel of the Lord.

He who is filled with the Spirit of holiness will have power with men. It was this which gave Stephen such "wisdom" and "power" as all "his adversaries were not able to gainsay nor resist." It was this that made the early Christians



“Mighty their envious foes to move,  
A proverb of reproach—and love.”

A man who had been an infidel for many years was finally converted. After his conversion he said: “Through all the years of my infidelity there was one argument in favor of the Christian religion, which I could never refute; and that argument was the consistent, godly life of my father.” Such a life exerts a constant influence for good on those who behold it.

#### POWER IN PRAYER

He who is filled with the Spirit will have power to prevail with God in prayer. The Holy Ghost is a Spirit of “grace and supplication;” and “He maketh intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered.” It was this which made Richard Baxter such a man of prayer and such a man of power. He “stained his study walls with praying breath,” and, as a result, a pentecostal wave of revival power swept over Kidderminster, in which scores and hundreds were saved. It was the Holy Ghost that enabled John Knox to pray, “O God, give me Scotland or I die!” until the bloody Queen of Scots trembled, and declared that she feared Knox’s prayers more than she feared an army. It was after three hours of fervent prayer, in the power of the Spirit, that Martin Luther proceeded to that august assembly known as the Diet of Worms, and there, in the presence of the Emperor, his illustrious princes, and the representatives of the Pope, “pronounced those sublime words, that, at the distance of three centuries, still make our hearts bound within us.” Asked in



the presence of that great assembly, which held in its hands his life or death, "Will you, or will you not retract?" he answered, as he looked around upon the assembled chiefs of State and Church: "Here I stand, and can say no more: God help me." Empire and Church on the one hand, and an obscure monk on the other, stood face to face; but that weak and poor man, standing alone, and depending on the Spirit of God for help, was enabled to prevail mightily, and publicly to bring to nought the wisdom and power of the princes and prelates who had assembled to judge and to condemn him.

Nor is this power lodged with great men, and public servants of God, to the exclusion of others. It is for the poorest and the weakest of God's children. *All* may have it. "The promise [of the Holy Ghost] is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). God chooses "the weak things of the world to confound the mighty"—"that no flesh should glory in His presence." He deposits "this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast ordained strength, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger."

## SPIRITUAL POWER OF TRUTH

The spiritual power of truth over the hearts of men was to be mightily increased by the advent and manifestation of the Comforter. Not only was there to be a clearer revelation of truth to the minds and hearts



of believers, but from the day in which the Holy Ghost was installed in office, a greater spiritual power was to attend the preaching of Christ's ambassadors and the testimony of His Church, than had ever attended His own public ministry. It was in immediate connection with the promise of the Comforter, that Jesus said to His disciples: The works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father. (John 14:12.) When the Holy Ghost was given at Pentecost, they preached the Gospel "in demonstration of the Spirit and in power," and thousands were converted in a single day. And that was but the inaugural day of a long-promised spiritual dispensation—of a dispensation of spiritual life, and love, and power which is to be perpetuated on the earth until "the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." To be "able ministers of the New Testament," we must be able, not only to expound "the letter," but to "minister the Spirit." We must preach, and testify, "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power." Unless, like the early heralds of Christianity, we "preach the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," our work will be vain, and might better never have been attempted.

If we do not have the Spirit of God [says Mr. Spurgeon], it were better to shut the churches, to nail up the doors, to put a black cross on them, and say: "God have mercy on us." If you ministers have not the Spirit of God, you had better not preach; and you people had better stay at home. I think I speak not too strongly when I say that a Church in the land without the Spirit of God is rather a



curse than a blessing. If you have not the Spirit of God, Christian worker, remember that you stand in somebody else's way; you are as a tree bearing no fruit, standing where some fruitful tree might grow. This is solemn work. Death and condemnation to a Church that is not yearning after the Spirit, and crying and groaning until the Spirit has wrought mightily in her midst. He is here. He has never gone back since He descended at Pentecost. He is often grieved and tried, for He is peculiarly jealous and sensitive, and the one sin never forgiven has to do with His blessed Person. Therefore, let us be very tender toward Him, walk humbly before Him, wait on Him very earnestly, and resolve that about us there shall be nothing knowingly continued which should prevent His dwelling in us.

Church of the living God, "Awake! awake! put on thy strength!" Yea, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:11-13).

## GREAT NEED TO-DAY

The great need of the Christian Church and of the Christian ministry of the twentieth century is the enduement of power from on high. It is not so much higher education that is demanded; it is not an increase of wealth with which to build magnificent temples of worship; it is not the power of human eloquence; it is not more church apparatus and machinery that is needed to make the Church efficient in



accomplishing her mission; but the great *sine qua non* is the *pentecostal fulness of the Holy Ghost!* "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord" (Zech. 4: 6).

Ministers and laymen wholly consecrated to God, and, like Peter, and Stephen, and Paul, and Barnabas, filled with the Holy Ghost and with power, "would revolutionize the Church, while others were preparing their manuscript sermons."

"Filled with the Holy Ghost!" This is the secret and source of power in the Church, and with every true member of the body of Christ. This is the fitness, and the only true fitness, for the work of God. Tarry then, dear reader, until endued with power from on high. Lie in the dust at the foot of the cross, until the quickening, inspiring, transforming, energizing Breath of God shall come upon thee, and, entering, fill thy soul with spiritual life and power, even "with all the fulness of God." Then shalt thou be endued with power. Then will God's strength be made perfect through thy weakness. Then, though thou art but a worm, God can use thee to thrash the mountains, and to exalt and glorify Himself in the salvation of sinful men.

At the naval battle of Salamis, Themistocles, the hero of the Greeks, tarried on shore until nine o'clock in the morning. Every patriot's heart beat with impatience at the delay, and it was hinted at the street corners that Themistocles had sold his country!

But that hero knew well that at nine o'clock a land-breeze would spring up that would send his boats to sea, and thus change the *rowers* into *warriors*, ready for the fight. In those days the war vessels were propelled by men at the



oars, and, should the wind do this work for them, their strength would be reserved for the battle.

By waiting for the land-breeze, Themistocles secured forty fighting men, instead of twenty, for each vessel.

That land-breeze represents the power of the Holy Ghost, energizing the believer, and making his efforts double in value. This is the power that God sends to secure victory to His people. Tarry ye, until ye be endued with power from on high.\*

#### A SUPERIOR SAFEGUARD FROM APOSTASY

The indwelling Comforter secures to believers in Christ *a stronger safeguard from apostasy* than the bodily presence and ministry of the Savior, without the Spirit, could have furnished.

Those who have received the sanctifying baptism of the Holy Ghost are still in a state of probation, and hence, are liable to fall from their gracious state. They are much less liable to fall, however, than they were before they received the gift of the Spirit as an indwelling Guide and Sanctifier. They who, in addition to the advocacy of Christ on their behalf in heaven, have the indwelling Paraclete, whose office-work it is to enlighten, quicken, sanctify, strengthen, guide, and console those in whom He dwells, are furnished with the highest degree of security compatible with a state of probation. Danger there certainly is, and always will be, until probation ends. The great problem to be solved is, how to reduce the danger to the minimum and increase the security to the maximum degree consistent with a probationary relation. God has solved that problem for us, and

\*Quoted from Dr. Prime.



has provided for the demand in full, in the gift and ministry of the Holy Ghost.

Those who live experimentally in the dispensation of the Spirit, realize the strengthening and establishing for which St. Paul prayed thus on behalf of the Ephesian Christians: "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:16-19). He who is thus "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man," who is "rooted and grounded in love," and who is "filled with all the fulness of God," may possibly fall from grace; but, in the vast majority of genuine cases, there will be no falling away from such a state.

What are the chief dangers that beset a believer? Those that lie in the external world, those that appeal to the five senses, those that appeal to the mind, they are one class; another class are those that lurk within—an unsoundness at the center, an inward aptitude for unholy things. Those dangers that lie within a man are greater than those that are without. A seed of sin within the soul is like a beautiful palace with a keg of powder concealed within it,—it may be the house will never burn down, but it would be a great deal safer with the powder away. \* \* \*

It is the work of the Holy Ghost to destroy the love of sin, and thereby open a fountain within of things good and heavenly, so that by purifying the fountain the stream is made pure. When the Holy Ghost takes hold of the will the rebellion is gone, and the will reposes on the bosom of God.



\* \* \* In the law of gravitation there is wonderful force, but it is so invisible and intangible that it is beyond our grasp. What is it that moves the worlds as they run on their lightning-footed marches? God has put His hand at their center, and they go better by being moved from the center than if they run in iron grooves. God purposes to hold you and me by sending the Holy Ghost, whom no man has seen nor can see, and enthroning Him in our souls, in our desires, in our wills, to guide us in our marches better than if we had guardian angels by our side, or walked with a visible Jesus. Men have been known to backslide within a finger-touch of Jesus. You and I are less liable to fall and better off than we should be had we the visible Christ without the Holy Ghost. We are better off than Adam was in Eden. He was a holy man, and fell into sin; we are in sin, and can rise into holiness. I would rather be a poor, yet saved crippled man, halting like Jacob, than to be Adam in Eden.\*

Thus God, in the riches of His grace, has made provision for our security from falling. Not that He has so arranged it that we can not fall, in our present state; but He has provided for the removal of our greatest danger, and for such a furnishing with spiritual strength and with spiritual armor, as prepares the believer for the conquest of every foe and every temptation, and as renders his preservation in holiness gloriously possible. This preservation is conditional, but the conditions are simple, and such as are possible to all. God has specified them very plainly in His Word, has called particular attention to them, and said, "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Pet. 1:10). The Holy Ghost is given to the end that we may be fully empowered for meeting those conditions.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from fall-

\*Sermon on "The Comforter," by Rev. G. D. Watson, D. D.



ing, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen" (Jude 24, 25).



### XIII

#### THE SPIRIT AS COMFORTER CONVICTING OF SIN

We now pass to consider the work of the Comforter in His relation to the unregenerate world. This work is one of spiritual conviction. It is set forth in most explicit terms in John 16:8-11. "And when He is come, He will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged" (R. V.). The present chapter will be devoted to considering the convicting work of the Comforter "in respect of sin."

#### THE TRUE NATURE OF THE SIN DISCLOSED

The true nature of sin can never be understood by men until it is disclosed to them by the Spirit of God. When He begins His convictive work in the human heart He produces a lively sense of what sin is, as viewed by Deity. It is not of *crime*, but of *sin* that He convinces the world; nor is it of sin regarded from a social point of view, but of sin as it lies between man and God. He so vividly and thoroughly demonstrates its horrible nature, that those who had previously accounted themselves models of morality



and virtue are filled with shame and with keenest compunction, as was Adam in Eden, from the realization that they are in the awful presence of God. He exposes sin in all its native blackness. He lays it bare under all its masks. He traces it through all the labyrinths of the heart, and throws His blazing light upon it as He finds it seated in its citadel within the soul. He makes sin appear "exceeding sinful," not only as it gleams and flashes in overt acts of transgression, or stalks abroad in hideous and ghastly forms on its mission of destruction among men; but as it lies concealed and smouldering in the man's own bosom, inflaming his passions, imaginations, affections, and desires, and corrupting the very fountain of his thought and action.

#### FINE MORAL DISTINCTIONS

The Spirit of God in His conviction of sin enables men to make such delicate distinctions as society can not make, and as civil laws take no cognizance of. Society condemns murder, adultery, theft, fraud, perjury, etc., and is organized for self-defense against these and their kindred crimes. Yet every member of society has in his own nature, unless renewed and sanctified by grace, the very root and principle of sin from whence spring *all* these evil fruits. Society condemns the actual taking of human life, through malice, as murder; but the Spirit of God convicts the heart where unholy anger burns, of murder, even though the evil passion may never have found outward expression. (1 John 3:15.) Society passes judgment against crime, but can go no farther; while



the Holy Spirit traces crime to its origin in the hidden depravity of the heart, and reveals this as the root and essence of every criminal action. Society condemns as an adulterer the man who revels in illicit commerce. But the Spirit of God condemns the lustful look as adultery already committed in the heart. Society defines falsehood as the utterance of untruth with intent to deceive. The Holy Ghost, in His convictive work, begets a subtler judgment, and shows us how, while no false statement has been uttered with the lips, a man's whole life may have been a falsehood of the darkest dye. He penetrates, with His searching light, into the region of motive, purpose, feeling, thought, and unexpressed desire, and shows men that supreme selfishness of their nature which is the tap-root of depravity—a sin so fiendish in its character that, if possible, it would dethrone Jehovah, seize the sceptre of the universe, and make all things minister to its infernal greed. Under the convincing ministry of the Holy Spirit men perceive that there is something vastly worse than *crime*, and that is *SIN*; and that it is possible, while one is esteemed respectable and virtuous among his fellow-men, that, according to this new law of judgment, he may be a murderer or an adulterer, or both, in the sight of God.

## THE SIN OF UNBELIEF

The particular form or manifestation of the world's sin which the Paraclete singles out in His ministry of conviction, is not to be found in the catalog of crimes or vices as known in civilized society; nor



among those dispositions of covetousness, lust, pride, ambition, avarice, envy, malice, revenge, and cruelty which are ever holding revel in the unregenerate heart. It is rather on that deadly, clinging disease of UNBELIEF, which no human skill, no earthly remedy can overcome, that this Divine Agent pours the beams of His convincing light. "Of sin," said Jesus, "*because they believe not on Me.*" Unbelief toward God is a sin of the greatest enormity, though men do not generally regard it as such, until convinced of it by the Holy Spirit. In His work of conviction He goes to the root of the evil and exposes the criminality of unbelief.

Want of faith in God is the great, the prime sin of our species—the source from whence springs every other form of sin. Hence the Spirit begins His work at this fountain-head of evil.

If a man is suffering from some physical disease which breaks out in sores and blotches, merely plastering over the eruptions will never remove the disorder. The root of the trouble must be reached, and the malady attacked in its strongholds. The skilful physician will always act on this principle. Even so the Spirit of God does not stop at the outward forms of sin, at intemperance, licentiousness, dishonesty, fraud, falsehood, and violence, even though these have debased the soul well-nigh to hell. Passing by all these, He goes directly to that sin which is the parent and root of all others—the "evil heart of unbelief."

It was by unbelief that the holy pair in Eden fell, entailing sin and misery upon the race. "In the day thou eatest thereof," said God, "thou shalt surely



die." Then the tempter whispered, "Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:3-5). They listened to the tempter's voice, disbelieved their wise Creator, reached forth, plucked and ate the fruit forbidden, and in that instant fell from their high estate; and, falling,

"Brought into this world a world of woe,  
Sin, and her shadow of Death, and Misery,  
Death's harbinger."\*

The moment they disbelieved God, the vital bond of union with Him was snapped, and they were "without God, and having no hope in the world." The only channel through which good could flow to their hearts was shut off, and, like a member severed from the body, everything about them partook of the taint of death, and savored of corruption. From that moment their hearts, like the earth subsequently cursed for man's transgression, brought forth thorns and thistles; and, like a poisoned fountain, sent forth only a poisonous and deadly stream. It was their disbelief of God that thrust them down from their high estate of purity and bliss; that filled them with a burning sense of guiltiness and shame; that turned them out of Paradise, and placed the Cherubim with flaming sword at Eden's gate to guard against their readmission; that doomed them to labor, sorrow, infirmity, disease, and death; that cursed the earth, and turned this once fair world into a Valley of Baca, an Aceldama, a Golgotha—a vale of sorrow, a field of

\*Milton.



blood, a habitation of death. It was their wicked unbelief that entailed corruption, misery, and death upon the unborn generations of their posterity, and that caused "the whole creation to groan and travail in pain together until now" under the malediction of Jehovah.

Want of faith in God and consequent estrangement from Him has been the prime, original sin and misery of the world in all the ages that have succeeded the Fall of our first parents. It is the sin of the world to-day. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). Unbelief is the occasion, if not the cause, of every other sin,—of all turning away from God, whether in our wills, our thoughts, our purposes, our affections and desires, or in the outward conduct of our lives. The radical sin of the world is the substitution of something else than God as the object of faith. It is "the believing that there is anything real, anything true, anything lasting, anything good and worthy and lovely, except God, and that into which He is pleased to pour out from the riches of His surpassing excellences—the believing that happiness may be found in something beside communion with God and dutiful obedience to His will."

Men will not believe the truth, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:11, 12). "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ,



who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4).

Since man will not believe God, there is nothing too gross, too absurd, too wild and extravagant for him to believe under the deluding power of Satan. Unregenerate men "believe that the fleeting pleasures of the flesh are more substantial and precious than the enduring joys of the Spirit—that the fitful admiration and favor of feeble man are more to be desired than the grace and love of Almighty God—that earth is truer and more real than heaven—that a life of a few years is longer and of more importance than a life extending through eternity—that the scarred and bloated carcass of sin, with its death's head, and its stinging snakes coiling restlessly around it, is lovelier and more to be desired than the pure and radiant beauty of holiness." It is this awful delusion, this belief of the devil's falsehoods, that keeps men in a state of enmity toward God, and that is drawing them swiftly on toward the maelstrom of eternal destruction. Man's wicked unbelief is the sin which, if the earth were purged from every other sin, would soon overspread the world with a fresh brood, as Egypt was overspread with plagues while Pharaoh withstood the prophet of God.

#### THE SIN OF REJECTING CHRIST

But the language of Christ is, "He shall convince the world of sin, \* \* \* *because they believe not on Me.*" According to this, we must believe that, since the Incarnation and the Crucifixion of our Lord, the sin of the world, and of which the world



must be convinced, is, that it does not believe in Christ. That is, that it does not believe in Christ as a manifestation of God to fallen man; as the Incarnation of Jehovah; as the Eternal Word (Logos) which was in the beginning with God, and was God (John 1:1), but which "was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) as the "Mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2:5), the only begotten Son of God, the appointed King and Savior of the world.

In His absolute Personality God can not be apprehended by fallen beings. He can scarcely be manifested to fallen man in any degree as an object of loving faith, save through a system of mediation. He is manifested to the sinless seraphs in glory, and was manifested to the unfallen pair in Eden, as He can not be manifested unto us, because of the limitations which sin has thrown around our spiritual natures. He "dwells in the light which no *man* can approach unto." The causative and sovereign Fatherhood of God can not be apprehended by our species except by special revelation. "Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him" (Matt. 11:27). It is only when He condescends to come forth out of His absolute Godhood, revealing Himself in the Person of the Son, and by the interior manifestation of the Spirit, that He is made known unto men in a sense which avails to produce in them a living faith. It is only when He manifests Himself as standing in direct relation to our species, and when that relation is such as presents Him in characters of the utmost loveliness and endearment, that the revelation of God has any power to elicit from man that filial affection and trust



toward Himself, which is the essence of all true faith. A living faith implies an immediate, conscious, personal relation.

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork” (Psa. 19:1). And, “The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead” (Rom. 1:20). But these disclosures of God’s infinitude are insufficient to produce a living, filial faith toward Him. They are universal in their character, as are all those revelations which constitute what is termed Natural Religion, save that of conscience. In their universality every finite individual is swallowed up, as the raindrops falling on the ocean are lost in its immensity. Not all the revelations of God in Nature have ever availed to produce a living, sanctifying faith on the part of any descendant of Adam. Since man’s fall, the image of God in which he was created, and through which God was manifested, has become so far defaced and obliterated, that man has lost every conception of its Divine Original, and regards it as a creature of his own mind. This is verified in the religions of the heathen world. Accordingly when God would inaugurate a system for the recovery of man from his ruin, when He would bring in a scheme by which to win back man’s faith and his allegiance, He was pleased to make a special revelation of Himself as standing in direct, personal relation to man, to every member of the human family. Hence the Incarnation. “God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us [and we beheld



His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father], full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

#### THE SOUL-DAMNING SIN

In the Person and work of Christ the Godhead is so manifested and brought down to us as not to surpass the reach of our hearts and minds. Nor is there anything in Christ to excite our fears. He came to our world as the only-begotten Son of God; as "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His Person;" and, in and through our nature, He gave us a sensible manifestation of the Godhead, in characters, adapted to elicit our faith and love. He came to sinners, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," that He might dispel their fears, and take away their shame. He came for no other purpose than "to call sinners to repentance," and to reconcile them unto God. He came as "the Mediator between God and men," through whom God could be revealed to sinners, and by whom sinners might draw nigh to God, and be at peace with Him. He "came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." He came as the embodiment and expression of Infinite Love and Mercy, that, knowing Him, we might believe in Him, and through Him believe also in the Father. "God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

Thus God has left man's unbelief without excuse, *and has caused his eternal salvation to hinge alone*



*upon faith in Jesus Christ.* And now if men will not believe in Christ, their continued unbelief manifests the most deep-rooted, malignant, and determined hostility to God. Since the coming of Christ, this has been THE SIN of the world; the sin which, in enormity, blackness, malignity, and blasphemous contempt for the Almighty, exceeds every other sin which men have ever committed. This is the sin for which the finally impenitent will be punished. For it is written in the Gospel, "*He that believeth not shall be damned.*"

The great sin, therefore, of which the Comforter is to convince the world is the sin of not believing in Christ—a sin of which the world, till thus convinced, would never dream as of so malignant a type; and concerning which, even at this day, few take any serious thought, save those who have been both convinced of and delivered from it by the Spirit of God.



## XIV

### THE SPIRIT AS COMFORTER CONVICTING OF SIN— CONTINUED

#### PERSONAL SINFULNESS EXPOSED

In convincing the world of sin, the Paraclete, who is the Holy Ghost, accomplishes His end by working in the hearts of men a most lively sense of their personal sinfulness. He does not aim merely to produce the conviction that the world, in its concrete sense, is fallen, and obnoxious to the wrath of God; but He undertakes to convince every man of his own utter sinfulness—to convince him that his individuality is as fully recognized by God in the sinfulness of the world as was that of Adam in the first transgression, or as though he were the only one in all the world who had ever sinned. Such was the conviction of sin which the Spirit wrought on the day of Pentecost. Such was the conviction He wrought in Saul of Tarsus. Such is the conviction that has been wrought in every person who has ever been led to “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This personal consciousness of sin when wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit will be so vivid and intense as to be painful beyond expression. The man will feel that the very “pains of hell” are taking hold upon him. He will see himself as he never saw



himself before. He will feel himself to be "the chief of sinners." Instead of being filled with self-righteousness, he will be filled with self-loathing and self-condemnation. His moral sense will be so acute that the smallest sin will seem to be unpardonable. There will be no longer in his mind any question of comparison as between himself and others, but the judgment will lie wholly between himself and God; and he will see himself as though he were the only sinner in the universe. His long-continued indifference toward Christ, and his oft-repeated turning away from Him when His voice so tenderly whispered, "Come," will, for the time, appear to him as a sin of such towering height and of such enormity as to outmeasure the mercy of God, and place him eternally beyond hope. With this conviction "a horror of great darkness" will be likely to fall upon him, and his soul will be seized with an agony which, in its measure, is akin to the anguish of the damned.

This personal conviction of sin may not be manifest to any other individual than him who experiences it. The anguish and trouble may all be kept within the heart, and the soul's deep sorrow may be concealed from others by an assumed appearance of mirthfulness and joy. Moreover this conviction may be resisted until it becomes "the sin unto death"—"the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall never be forgiven." But, whether manifested and heeded, or otherwise, the conviction of sin is wrought by the Spirit of God in every man, in a degree which leaves him utterly and forever without excuse if he fails of repentance and reconciliation with God. Like the man in the parable, he will be speechless.



## THE SPIRIT ALONE ADEQUATE

Nothing short of the Holy Spirit could ever avail to produce this conviction in the hearts of men. *Conscience* could never of itself produce it, since conscience seldom takes cognizance of even habitual sins, much less of the inborn sinfulness of the natural heart, and still less of that particular sin in question—unbelief. Conscience busies itself for the most part with reproofs, and warnings against fresh acts of outward transgression, and may be so crushed and violated by the sinner through repeatedly disregarding its kindly ministry, that it will lay down its office-work entirely. Even under the most favorable circumstances it is insufficient to produce that living, permanent, practical, personal conviction of sin's exceeding sinfulness and hateful bondage, which is necessary to true repentance.

And then, conscience needs instruction and guidance itself. Its voice is only a veto forbidding what is already acknowledged as wrong. Of itself it has no power or discernment to determine what is wrong.

Nor is the Moral Law of God alone sufficient to produce the needed conviction of sin. Law deals with outward conduct rather than with those dispositions from which the outward conduct issues. The Law shows man that he has sinned, convinces him of guilt, and adjudges him to be worthy of death. It excites his fears and fills him with cowardly apprehensions of impending doom. But the Law fails to convince him of his utter sinfulness—of sin *as* sin, as that which is to be abhorred for its own diabolical hatefulness. The Word of God is quick and powerful,



sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. 4:12.) But this sword does its execution only when wielded by the arm of the Holy Spirit. Conscience and the written Law of God are two Witnesses which are arrayed against man for his conviction, both of which perform the work to which they were appointed, unerringly; but both of which are insufficient to produce that deep, abiding, personal sense of the awful and damning nature of sin, in that which comprises its root and essence—unbelief. And this conviction must be thoroughly wrought, if sin is to be banished from the world. Hence, God has mercifully provided another Witness, even the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, to produce this conviction in mankind.

## REVEALS THE NEED OF ATONEMENT

In convincing the world of sin the Spirit of God also shows men *the necessity of an atonement*. In this sense *περὶ ἁμαρτίας* (which the Authorized Text renders “of sin,” and the Revised Version translates, “in respect of sin”) may properly be understood. There must be such a conviction of sin, that is, of the nature of sin, of a state of sin, and of actual sin, as will fully satisfy the soul that it is utterly obnoxious to the curse of the Law and to the wrath of God, and powerless to remedy its own condition; and that, unless a “Daysman” can be found to stand between it and God and “lay his hands upon them



both," there is no hope for its recovery. Under this conviction all self-hope will expire. The vanity of "turning to others for help will be manifest, since they will be seen to be groaning under the same curse, and to lie helpless under a like spiritual paralysis."

The feeling of such a soul may be expressed in the language which the prophet ascribes to backslidden Israel: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah 6: 6, 7.) The necessity of an offering, sacrifice, and atonement for sin, as the only way of approach to God, will be deeply wrought in the sinner's consciousness; and, until such a way of approach is discovered, he will languish in unutterable torment. He will be filled with a due apprehension and with a resolved judgment that there is no way within the compass of his own contrivance to ascertain, or of his own ability to pursue, that leads to the favor of God; and that there is no other way of Divine appointment and approval by which he can be delivered from his present wretchedness and from "the wrath to come," than that which is presented in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"This is the conviction of sin which the Spirit of God is to work in hearts which have not believed in the Savior of the world. Jesus Christ can not be understood till sin is understood. So long as sin is regarded from a merely social point of view, the



cross of Christ must appear to be an exaggeration,—justice assuming a sensational attitude. Why do with blood a work that could as well be done with water? Why sacrifice a man when the blood of a beast would answer every purpose? These inquiries are legitimate so long as *sin* is underrated or misunderstood, but the moment that sin is seen under the illumination of Infinite Holiness, the cross of Christ alone is equal to the tragic awe and appalling horror of the situation.”\*

ACTS AS COMFORTER IN HIS CONVICTION OF SIN

It may seem strange that He whose mission is to “convince the world of sin” should, in that particular relation, be designated by our Lord as the Paraclete or Comforter. We have seen, however, that the Word, which is translated Comforter, signifies also an Advocate, a Defender of a cause. And the convictive work of the Spirit, as described by Christ, may be an allusion to the office of an advocate in a court of justice, who, by producing testimony, and pleading upon the proof, convicts the opposite party, demonstrates the righteousness of his client, and shows the necessity of passing judgment on the guilty party. But, even if we regard the Spirit in the relation of a Comforter, there is no such inconsistency in the use of this appellation to describe Him in His ministry of conviction, as might at first be supposed. He deports Himself as the *Comforter of the Church*, in the conviction of the world. Without His presence and ministry the Church could never accomplish

\*“Mission of the Comforter,” by Archdeacon Hare.



her mission among men. She would soon be overcome and swallowed up of the world. But with the indwelling Comforter she goes forth from conquering to conquest. "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her and that right early." The testimony and unction of the Spirit accompanying the testimony of the Church gives her power to convince men of sin, and bring them to repentance and salvation.

(Moreover, the Spirit of God is a Comforter even toward those whom He convinces of sin. He convinces men of sin, not merely that they may be covered with shame and confusion, and filled with unutterable anguish and dismay.) He seeks by this rather to show them the nature of their malady, that He may induce them to accept the only cure provided. (He shows them their spiritual destitution, that He may lead them to accept the true riches—the "gold tried in the fire.") He shows them their exposure to the wrath of God, that He may prevail upon them to accept the terms of reconciliation with Him, while the golden sceptre of His grace is extended toward them.) He probes their wounds that He may pour in the balm of healing, comfort and holy joy.) Were the consciousness of sin produced by any other ministry than that of the Comforter, we might well despair. But when it comes from Him, hope, comfort, and healing accompany it. He convinces men of the sin of not believing in Christ, that, being led to believe in Him, they may find remission for every sin, the assurance of acceptance before God, the witness of adoption into the heavenly family, and a fulness of that "peace which floweth like a river."



## XV

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS COMFORTER CONVICTING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The conviction of sin and the conviction of righteousness are correlated, and are wrought out simultaneously by the Holy Spirit. In fact, the whole convictive work of the Comforter, as described by our Lord, may properly be considered as "one great quickening operation manifested by its threefold effect."\*

#### THE DIVINE STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

When our Lord affirmed of the Comforter, "He shall convince the world of righteousness because I go to the Father, and ye see Me no more," He evidently designed "to give a simple *rationale* of the process by which the Divine authority was to be attached to His own life and death as the Mediator between God and men."†

When Christ had risen from the dead, and had ascended into heaven, the Divine sanction was thereby affixed to His character and doctrine, which henceforth became the Divinely appointed standard of righteousness. When under the preaching of the Gospel "in demonstration of the Spirit," men should believe on the ascended Christ, as the Redeemer, Savior,

\*Archdeacon Hare. †Ibid.



and final Judge of the world, then the righteousness of Christ would become to them the righteousness which God required, and without which they would be convicted as sinners in His sight.)

#### THE WORLD'S CONCEPTION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The world has never been able of itself to form a true and adequate conception of righteousness, any more than it has been able to form a right judgment concerning sin. In all ages the world has had its notion of sin, its theory of righteousness, and its conception of moral differences; but the world's theories and ideas have been shallow, superficial, wholly inadequate, fallacious, and deceptive. In His convictive work the Comforter refutes the world's false theories, shows it the spiritual essence and reality of what it had but dimly and imperfectly conceived before, and both negatively and positively carries out a profound and vital work of spiritual conviction.

The cause of man's inability to form a just conception of righteousness, is his own moral degeneracy. He is so far fallen from original righteousness, so lost to every feature of that image in which he was first created, that he can scarcely frame any idea concerning it, even as an object of intellectual contemplation. He has never seen a pattern of righteousness in comparison with which he might discern his own likeness, both "in its original, heaven-born purity, and in its earth-sprung deformity and ruin." A muddy pool will not reflect a distinct image. A cracked and spotted mirror can not reflect a clear



and perfect likeness. Even so a fallen, sinful nature can not, of itself, form any just conception of righteousness and true holiness. Righteousness is so far exalted above our nature that it can not enter into our thoughts, except by special revelation from heaven. Much less can man, unaided, embody the true idea of righteousness in the object of his worship.

It has been aptly suggested that were it possible for man to form any distinct and lively conception of righteousness at all, we should certainly expect to find the embodiment of that conception, in its highest form, in the gods man has worshiped. But the gods of every unevangelized nation, instead of being regarded by their worshipers as possessed of the attributes of holiness, have been invested with almost every vicious and sinful propensity which has ever degraded human nature. As nations have emerged from rudest barbarism into a more civilized condition, they have, we admit, attained to more elevated and chaste conceptions regarding their deities; but, the more refined and elevated the conceptions formed under the mere light of reason, the less powerful have they been, since they are the farther removed from affinity for human beings, and the more fully relegated to the realm of mere visionary abstractions. The gods of Philosophy have been practically no better than the gods of heathen and barbarous nations, so far as impressing men with a distinct and adequate sense of righteousness. Nor has Deism made a much more favorable showing. In fact, everything short of Revealed Religion has been an utter failure at this point.



## AGENCY OF THE SPIRIT REQUIRED

As it is utterly impossible for the conviction of sin to be wrought in the world, or for a just judgment concerning it to be impressed upon any individual heart, by any other agency than the Spirit of God, so it is in regard to the demonstration of righteousness. It is only by the Spirit of God that a deep and thorough conviction of righteousness can be engraven upon individual hearts, or that man can form any just conception regarding God's ideal of virtue. Man's own mind and heart, as we have already seen, are incapable, through spiritual blindness and deadness, of forming such a conception. Nor have any other agencies of a natural character been able to work out efficiently and sufficiently the demonstration of righteousness in the minds of men. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

It is said that "Poetry culls the fairest flowers of human life, and brightens them still more with the glowing hues of the imagination." But Poetry is powerless to convince the world of righteousness. And, it has been remarked that it never undertakes the delineation of a perfect character. This would so far divest it of all resemblance to human character as to place it beyond the range of human sympathy, and render it a shadowy and spiritless abstraction. The poetic delineation of a character unstained by sin, however great its literary excellence, could scarcely attract the world's attention, and would be



as inadequate to convince the world of righteousness, as the terms red, blue, green, and yellow, would be to produce a just conception of the colors they represent, in the mind of one who was born blind.

As vain also are the efforts of Philosophy to work in mankind a conviction of righteousness. Her speculations are wholly unsuited to such a task. She is unable of herself to rise above the range of mere natural phenomena, and hence is incompetent to produce any profound spiritual conviction. She does, indeed, pay homage to a God, so-called, but the God of Philosophy, as we have already seen, is invested with those attributes which are the least peculiarly human, and which place him at such a vast remove from sympathetic relation to our species, that the human mind, in its darkness and helplessness, can derive no light or aid from contemplating such a Deity. The speculations of Philosophy merge all the attributes of the Godhead she adores into abstract law, or naked power.

Philosophy has never yet been able satisfactorily to convince herself of righteousness. Hence she has been repeatedly shifting from one theory to another, and has never been able to fix upon a standard by which she could herself abide. At one time she boldly decrees that "Might is Right;" in another age she makes Intellectual Eminence the criterion of moral worth; and then again, she glorifies Genius as the synonym of virtue. In one age of the world she unfurls the banner of Gnosticism over land and sea, and, under the assumption of possessing the true *Gnosis* of the universe, she undertakes to rival Christianity in solving the problem of evil, and in estab-



lishing the rule and ground of righteousness. Failing in this experiment, another age witnesses her marching forth with Agnosticism emblazoned on her banner, and audaciously denying the supernatural and the spiritual, upon the unphilosophical assumption that "nothing can be known beyond phenomena."

For more than two millenniums Philosophy has been experimenting in the matter of endeavoring to restore this lapsed and demoralized world to moral rectitude and equilibrium. The experiment has been a consummate failure, chiefly because of that which it has so fully demonstrated, namely, the incompetence of Philosophy either to convince the world of sin, or to produce an adequate conception of righteousness. Whenever, unilluminated and unguided by the Spirit of God, she has undertaken to deal with moral and spiritual problems, she has either plunged into the depths of mysticism and fanatical excess, or else has undertaken to degrade everything in the universe to the level of gross materialism; in either of which instances she virtually abolishes the ground of all moral distinctions, and only helps to perpetuate the disastrous consequences of the Fall.

Alike powerless with Poetry and Philosophy is mere Natural Religion to convict the world of righteousness. The religions of the heathen world have never been able to afford the spectacle of righteousness as a living, active reality, nor even to yield a true conception of it as an object of contemplation, in connection with the objects of its worship. The best forms of religion the heathen world has ever known, and the best systems of morals it has ever adopted, have only proven that the race is so fully



lost to every true idea of righteousness that only He who made man upright in the beginning can ever restore him to a conception of the image in which he was originally made.

The religions of pagan nations have ever been destructive of morality. A gloomy superstition has pervaded most of them, which has fostered ferocious and cruel dispositions. Their mysteries, whatever may have been their original design, were too horribly corrupt to be described. Their temple rites and the worship of their gods were associated with every species of impurity. Such has been, and such is, the tendency of every form of pagan religion.

This immoral tendency of their religion [says Dr. Richard Watson] was confirmed and perfected by the very character of their gods, whose names were perpetually in their mouths; and whose murderous and obscene exploits, whose villanies and chicaneries, whose hatred and strifes were the subject of their popular legends; which made up, in fact, the only theology, if so it may be called, of the body of the people. That they should be better than their gods was not to be expected, and worse they could not be. Deities with such attributes could not but corrupt, and be appealed to, not merely to excuse, but to sanctify the worst of practises.\*

The philosophers and moralists of the heathen world, while descanting on the excellence of virtue and formulating moral codes, have at the same time exalted the worst vices of humanity, placing them in the list of virtues, and condemned as unmanly weaknesses those dispositions and graces which evidence the highest virtue. Cicero taught that one mark of a good man is that "he hurts no one except when injured himself." Concerning himself, he also declared,

\*"Institutes."



"I will revenge all injuries, according as I am provoked by any." Aristotle regarded meekness as a defect, and revenge as "a more manly thing." Menander laid down the rule that "a lie is better than a hurtful truth." Plato, who has been described as "of ethereal understanding," says: "He may lie who knows how to do it in a fit season;" while both Plato and the Stoics make a distinction between an uttered lie, and a lie otherwise expressed. Deceit and falsehood have ever characterized pagan nations, having the sanction of their gods, and being consistent with their religions.

From these considerations may be seen the necessity there is that the Spirit of God should undertake the task of convincing the world of righteousness. If this world is ever to be redeemed from its present fallen state, if men are ever to be won back to the righteousness from which they have fallen, there must be not only a conviction of the awful sinfulness and utter wretchedness of the race, but also a profound, vital, and spiritual conviction or demonstration of the nature and attainability of righteousness—of righteousness according to God's ideal. This can be effected by the Holy Ghost alone.



## XVI

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS COMFORTER CONVICTING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS—CONTINUED

#### THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

The sin of which the Comforter was to convince the world was the sin of unbelief—of unbelief toward Christ. Accordingly He was to convince the world of *its own sin*. But inasmuch as He was to convince the world of its own sin, it can not be that He was to convince the world of its own righteousness. For in convincing it of sin, he convinces it that it has no righteousness of its own; that “the children of men are all gone aside; they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one” (Psalm 14:2, 3). And as the particular sin of which the world had to be convinced was a sin which, had the world been left to itself, it would never have dreamed of as such, so the righteousness of which the Spirit of God must convince the world, is a righteousness such as the world could never have conceived of, but for the convictive ministry of the Comforter. As the sin of which men had to be convinced was the sin of not believing in Christ, so the righteousness of which they must be convinced is a righteousness which can never come to them save through the instrumentality of faith in Christ.

From the days of the Fathers until the present



time learned discussion and criticism have been employed in endeavoring to determine whose righteousness is referred to in the Scripture under consideration. Numerous and diverse have been the expositions given of these words of Christ. The following have been gathered from various sources. Tauler's interpretation (based upon the rendering of the Greek term by the verb *reprove*) is, that the Holy Ghost will reprove *our* righteousness—that He will make us to know that “our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” But in this interpretation the connection is overlooked between the Spirit's work of conviction, and Christ's return to the Father. “Of righteousness,” said Jesus, “*because I go unto the Father.*”

Augustine regarded the righteousness of which the Spirit was to convince the world as the imputed righteousness of Christ, the righteousness which the believer in Christ receives through Him by faith. But as others have already shown, this interpretation seems to overlook the primary meaning of the passage, and establishes only an arbitrary relation between Christ's withdrawal from the world, and the demonstration of righteousness by the Holy Spirit.

Chrysostom's interpretation makes the word righteousness refer merely to Christ's personal righteousness, or innocence, of which His going to the Father was proof.

Luther regarded the passage in question as expressive of that doctrine of justification by faith, which he felt especially called to set forth and defend. Calvin's exposition of the passage is substantially the same as Luther's.

Dr. Lightfoot interprets the word righteousness as



expressing the twofold idea of Christ's personal and inherent righteousness, and of his communicated or justifying righteousness.

Adam Clarke adopts the historical view of Chrysostom, and interprets the righteousness of which the Comforter is to convince the world, as the personal holiness and innocence of Christ. This is the view adopted by many Armenian divines, some of whom, be it said with profound regret, have reduced the unfathomable mystery of the Spirit's convictive operation as herein described to a level with the interpretation given by Socinus himself. They make it appear as though our blessed Lord were merely a good man, and a martyr to a good cause, whose righteousness and sufferings in this world were to be remunerated in the next; while Socinus does not lower our Lord's words more than this, when he says: "*Of righteousness, because it is righteous, or was, that Christ whom they had treated so shamefully, should be removed from the sight of men, and never be beheld by them.*"

The only key to the correct interpretation of the words, "He shall convince the world of righteousness," is found in the tenth verse, where our Lord says, by way of explanation, "*Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see Me no more.*" Now Christ's going to the Father could in no way be a proof of the world's righteousness. "On the contrary, it was the fullest, completest, most damnatory of all proofs of the world's unrighteousness and iniquity." And if it be said that the Spirit is to "*reprove*" the world of its own righteousness, as hollow, superficial, hypocritical, and unworthy of the name,



it may be said that this interpretation fails to manifest the connection between the Spirit's ministry of reproof and Christ's departure to the Father. The plain meaning of our Lord seems to be this:

My departure to be with the Father (which departure we are to understand as including His death, resurrection, and ascension) will demonstrate My righteousness, and attach the Divine sanction to My doctrine and example *as the Divine standard of righteousness*. It will manifest the only ground upon which men who are convinced of sin can become righteous before God; and will be a standing proof to the universe of the righteousness of the Divine administration in offering pardon to a guilty world. Having thus finished My redemptive ministry; having spoken the Word and shown the example of righteousness; having made expiation for sin; having manifested the righteousness of the Divine administration; and having ascended to the Father in token of His satisfaction with My finished work; the Comforter will come, and, under the economy which He will introduce, "will begin a great spiritual process, by which My outward and visible work will receive spiritual illumination and exposition."

It is the mission of the Comforter to convince the world, not of its own righteousness, of which it has none, but of the righteousness of Him who came to redeem it. The outward demonstration of this has been given to the world in the resurrection and ascension of our Lord. The inward spiritual conviction of the same must be wrought among men by the Holy Ghost. To this end Christ withdrew Himself from the sight of men, and ascended to the Father. The outward and visible demonstration was insufficient. It might, to some extent, convince the intellect, but could never of itself convince the heart. While Christ was on earth "the light was shining



in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:5). "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26); yet "He was despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:3). "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:22), yet He was condemned and crucified as a malefactor. He challenged the Jews to convince Him of sin, and they could prove nothing against Him, though determined to crucify Him. Pilate thrice examined Him and declared plainly: "I find no fault in Him;" and when he would have released Jesus, the unbelieving Jews cried out: "Not this man, but Barabbas"—thus desiring a murderer to be granted unto them, and demanding the crucifixion of the immaculate Son of God.

Thus the world denied Christ's claim to righteousness, disputed His profession of Messiahship, declared Him to be an execrable impostor, and finally seemed to have triumphed in its attempted demonstration of His unrighteousness, by His crucifixion. While Christ's body was on the cross and in the sepulchre, it seemed to the world, and even to those who had been with Him as disciples through all His ministry, and who "trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel," that His cause had suffered inglorious and irremediable defeat. But just when it seemed that the world had triumphed, and had demonstrated the falsity of Christ's profession, thus putting an end to the religion He had sought to establish, the grandest demonstration of His holiness and of His Messiahship was given to the world by His resurrection from the dead. If He were "the Prince of life," He could not possibly "see cor-



ruption.” If He were the world’s Redeemer, He could not possibly be held under the dominion of death, any more than the sun can be bound with a chain of darkness. He had declared before His crucifixion that He would demonstrate His righteousness and authority by His resurrection from the dead. (John 2:18-21.) His disciples in their sorrow seem to have forgotten this. Hope well nigh expires within their breasts, while the body of Jesus reposes in the tomb. But on the morning of the third day, the angel of the Lord descends and rolls away the stone with which the sepulchre was sealed, and the risen Christ comes forth as the CONQUEROR OF DEATH! Now, “the Stone which the builders refused is made the head of the corner” (Psa. 118:22). Thus Christ is “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4).

As death, the grim specter which ever follows inseparably at the heels of sin, fled before this mighty Prince and Conqueror, it follows that such a Conqueror must needs be also without sin—“the Holy One of God.” And as Jesus ascended into heaven to dwell in the bosom of the everlasting Father, He gave the strongest proof thereby that He had fulfilled *all* righteousness, since only the pure in heart can see God—none but the perfectly holy can be admitted to His glorious presence. Christ’s pure and perfect righteousness enabled Him, *through His own merit*, to enter within the vail, and stand as our Representative and Advocate before the throne of God. And now we who have sinned “have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the Righteous.”



The outpouring of the Holy Spirit consequent upon Christ's departure from the world was a proof that He had ascended to the Father—that God had “exalted Him,” whom the world rejected, “to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31). And the mission of the Comforter now is to testify of Christ, as our resurrected and glorified Redeemer. He convinces men that, in their obstinate refusal to believe on Christ, consists the great, the damning sin of the race; and, that He may the more effectually convince them of the desperate wickedness of this unbelief, He also convinces them of the pure, perfect, spotless righteousness of Christ, whom the world by unbelief is still rejecting.

The conviction of sin and the conviction of righteousness, therefore, necessarily accompany each other. They can not be divorced, as neither is accomplishable without the other. It is by contrast with Christ's stainless purity and perfect obedience that we the more clearly discern our own utter sinfulness and hopelessly fallen state; and it is the conviction of our own sinfulness that brings us where we can recognize a perfection of righteousness in Christ which fully meets the Divine ideal, and which, while necessary to us, can never be attained except it be communicated to us from above.

IN THIS PART OF HIS CONVICTIVE MISSION THE SPIRIT  
ACTS AS COMFORTER

The Holy Spirit in convincing the world of righteousness deports Himself as the Divine *Comforter*.



The appropriateness of the title by which our Lord designates Him in His convictive mission may, at first, seem questionable. Yet He is rightly called the Comforter in reference to this particular ministry, and especially in reference to that part of it which we are now considering—the conviction of righteousness.

To convince the world of Christ's righteousness is to produce an overwhelming demonstration of the world's all-pervading sinfulness. This might seem designed to cast men down into the horror of despair. It would be thus, were it not that, in convincing the world of Christ's perfect righteousness, He reveals that righteousness, *as it is fundamentally related to the Atonement, and to Christ's priestly ministry in heaven*. He convinces us that Christ's righteousness enabled Him to offer unto God an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and then to ascend into heaven there to present the merits of that sacrifice in behalf of all who should believe on Him, that He might procure for them the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify their natures. Thus Christ's righteousness becomes the righteousness of all who will give up the sin of unbelief, and, by faith appropriate to themselves the virtue of His Atonement, and receive Him into their hearts as their King and Savior. It is by convincing us that Christ's righteousness is our righteousness, not only by imputation, but by impartation, provided we believe on Him, that the Holy Spirit affords us heavenly and everlasting comfort. "This is the name whereby He shall be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23:6).



Christ came not into this world to lead a pure and holy life for His own sake. He was adored in heaven from all eternity as the High and Holy One. He dwelt in the bosom of the everlasting Father, and was an equal sharer in all the glory of the Godhead. "He was rich," says St. Paul, "but for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich."

He brought His righteousness down to earth and manifested it amid the moral darkness and the universal wickedness of this world for our sakes—that we might become partakers of that righteousness, and that He might thereby exalt us with Himself to be partakers of His own glory. He said, concerning those who believe on Him, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19).

When, by sin, this world had been plunged into moral night and ruin, and "a horror of great darkness" had fallen upon the entire race, through which man could not look up to God and heaven, and through which no ray of celestial light could penetrate to earth; then "the [eternal] Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us [and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father], full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). He took our nature upon Himself, that He might make us partakers of His own. (2 Peter 1:4.) He came and dwelt amid the darkness of the world, that He might be the Light of the world—that He might chase its darkness forever away. When the sun rises and pursues his course through the heavens, like a strong man girded for a race, it is not for his own sake, it is not merely



to convince the world that he himself is light; but it is rather that he may disperse his light abroad upon those orbs which otherwise must remain enveloped in eternal darkness—it is that other worlds may be partakers of his light with all its gracious influences. So, when Jesus Christ appeared in this world as “the Sun of Righteousness,” His righteousness was to be manifested until its light encircled the earth and filled the heavens,—not merely to convince the world that He Himself was “the Holy One of God,” but in order that He might bestow that righteousness on all who, beholding it, would open their hearts to receive it, as the flowers of earth unfold themselves to welcome the sunlight which gives them their rich and variegated hues.

CONVICTION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS MUST PRECEDE THE  
EXPERIENCE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Before “the righteousness of God” can be wrought *in* us, however, there must be produced in us such a lively conviction thereof as shall give us the deepest sense of our own utter sinfulness, and the keenest realization that Christ is “the righteousness of God” for us—the only righteousness in which we can ever stand accepted before God. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” The Holy Spirit alone can produce this conviction; and because Christ has gone to the Father and the world seeth Him no more, the Comforter has been sent into the world to carry out this work of spiritual conviction in the hearts of men. Christ, having, through His own perfect righteous-



ness, "entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us," has procured for us "the Spirit of holiness," whom He sends to convince us that the righteousness in which He ascended to the Father, is *our* righteousness; *i. e.*, the righteousness which is to descend upon us from Him, as Elijah's mantle fell upon Elisha, and which is to be perfected in us by the operation of the indwelling Comforter, on the condition of our reliance upon it as the only ground of our justification before God.

The righteousness of which the Spirit of God must convince the world, then, is what St. Paul terms, "*the righteousness which is of God by faith.*" It is a righteousness which descends from God, which is given through Christ, and which is received only by faith. The withdrawal of Christ from human gaze, and His spiritual manifestation by the ministry of the Comforter, render it easier for us to make His righteousness our own, since it aids in the production of that faith by which alone we can be made righteous. Were Christ always manifest to our senses, we should live and walk by sight rather than by faith, since sight, as belonging to the realm of sense, disturbs faith, and tends to its destruction. Faith, to exert its full power, must be purely and wholly faith—*faith unmixed with sense*, and hence, not partaking of its frailties. That love which springs from faith in an unseen object of affection is always stronger than that which results from actual vision of the object. This is true of man in his present state, owing to the infirmity and imperfection of his sensuous nature. The disciples loved their Master while He was with them in the flesh, but it was with a mix-



ture of grossness in their affection which was the result of their fleshly infirmity. But when they could see Him no more after a fleshly manner, faith, which is the eye of the soul, began to open to them a spiritual manifestation of Christ, and as they apprehended the invisible Lord through the operation of faith, their love toward Him became pure, strong, holy, heavenly, and imperishable. Thus they beheld in Him a glory and perfection of which they could form no adequate conception while they knew Him only as an object of sight. And thus beholding the invisibly glorious Christ, they were "changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This faith also filled them with assurance and joyfulness. Hence the language of St. Peter: "Whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls" (1 Peter 1:8-10).

When our love springs from the root of faith, then alone may it hope to blossom through eternity. In like manner, when our righteousness springs from the root of faith, then will it flourish in the courts of the temple of God. For what is our righteousness, when it comes to us through faith? It is not ours but Christ's: and every thing that is Christ's is well-pleasing in the eyes of God. By faith we pass out of this world of sense. By faith we put off our carnal nature, and put on a new spiritual nature, through which we shall not be found naked. By faith we receive the power to cast away our sins, and to live a life of holiness and love. Through faith, giving ear to the voice of the Comforter, the evil spirit is driven out of us, as he was driven out of Saul by the harp of David. Through faith we are lifted out of ourselves. Through faith we cease to be specks of foam,



dashed along the furrows of the homeless wave. Through faith we become members of the everlasting body of Christ; the Spirit of Christ passes into us; and thus in the fulness of time we too shall go with Him to His Father.\*

\*Hare's "Mission of the Comforter."



## XVII

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS COMFORTER CONVICTING OF JUDGMENT

The convictive work of the Comforter is threefold. Coëxistent with the conviction of sin and of righteousness the conviction of judgment is wrought in the hearts of men. The world in its natural condition is utterly wanting in a just conception of these three things. "Darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the people." In order, therefore, to the recovery of the world from moral ruin, this threefold conviction must be wrought by the Spirit of God.

The conviction in respect of judgment is as necessary as the conviction of sin and of righteousness, since without the conviction of judgment, the conviction of sin and the conviction of righteousness would be of no avail.

### THE WORLD'S CONCEPTION OF MORAL DIFFERENCES

The world has ever had some conception of moral differences, of right and wrong, of good and bad; but the trouble has always been that its estimate of these things has been based upon mere external appearances, and hence its judgment concerning character has shown regard for the most obvious differences only, "having no reference to those deep, spiritual elements and facts which underlie and



account for all human conduct." Its theory of judgment (if, indeed, its notion of moral differences is entitled to be called a theory of judgment) has ever been as imperfect and erroneous as have been its conceptions of sin and righteousness. Hence the imperative need that the Holy Ghost should come, and, directing the attention of men to Calvary, convince them in the light of that Cross on which the Redeemer of men expired, regarding "the judgment of this world."

Until men are fully convinced that this world is under judgment or condemnation, they will persistently cleave to sin and continue to pursue the way to death. In fact, until then they can never rightly estimate the enormity of sin, the guiltiness of mankind, or the awfulness of the world's impending doom. The conviction of judgment makes the conviction of sin and of righteousness more clear and complete, and the conviction of sin and of righteousness prepares the mind for the conviction of judgment. To convince the world of the nature of sin, and of the universal depravity of the human family, and then to convince it of the pure, perfect, and everlasting righteousness of Christ as the only righteousness which is acceptable to God and in which men can stand before Him in peace; would, if unaccompanied by the conviction of judgment, be insufficient to make men feel their own personal guilt in such a degree as would move them to repentance toward God. Until the conviction of judgment is wrought in them by the Spirit of God, men, though admitting their sinfulness, are prone to excuse their wrong-doing on the ground that they were born in sin, that they are in



an evil world, and that they are unable to escape or overcome the power of temptation.

Satan has usurped the government of this world, and has bound men with the chains of sin, from which they are powerless of themselves to break away. Men may be convinced of this fact, but if they have no further conviction, they will never realize their own guilt and condemnation for remaining in a sinful state.

But, if they can be convinced that he who bound them with their chains is judged (or cast out from his seat of usurped authority over men), and that the chains of sin have been broken so that men need be in bondage to sin no more, they will then begin to realize that their sin is without excuse or mitigation. They will then begin to see and feel that they are servants of the wicked one from deliberate choice, and that therefore his judgment and condemnation as their head and ruler, is their judgment and condemnation, justly merited, because of their voluntary consent to his dominion over them.

#### THE SPIRIT TO PRODUCE THIS CONVICTION

To produce such a conviction in the minds of men is the work of the Holy Ghost. He shows them that this was the meaning of Christ's conquest in the Temptation, of His asserted authority over evil spirits in His ministry, and of His crucifixion, and His resurrection from the dead. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak



through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned [literally, *gave judgment against*] sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8: 3, 4).

## THE JUDGMENT OF SATAN

Christ's righteousness was not manifested in order merely to reveal the sin of the world, but in order *to cast it out*, to scatter and confound it, to drive it forever away. When He came among men to inaugurate a war against sin it was not to the end that the victory should be doubtful and incomplete, but that it might be made certain and all-comprehensive. When He left the bosom of the Father and came to our world, it was not to share its dominion with Satan, the Usurper. He came rather to *overthrow* Satan, and to cast him out of his seat of empire. Yea, and He did overthrow him, and forever cast him out. The contest was a fearful one, but Christ achieved the victory. He wrested the sceptre from Apollyon, cast him from the throne of evil, and waved His own sword of Light before Him in token of complete victory.

"So after many a fall the tempter proud,  
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride,  
Fell whence he stood to see his Victor fall."

Christ's mission on earth was to judge, or cast out, sin and Satan, and potentially He has judged and cast them out. And now the Comforter, who succeeds the visible manifestation of Christ, convinces



the world of judgment "*because the prince of this world hath been judged.*"

That the foregoing interpretation of the Scripture under consideration is the correct one will be made more fully evident by reference to our Lord's words on the same subject as recorded in John, 12th Chapter, beginning with the 27th verse: "Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake unto Him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment (*crisis*) of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die."

The first thing to be determined in ascertaining the meaning of this passage is, who our Lord meant by "the prince of this world." By reference to John 14:30, we find our Lord using the expression as descriptive of Satan. He says: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." "The epithet, 'prince of this world,'" says Dr. Adam Clarke, "is repeatedly applied to the devil (referring to its use among the Jews) or to *Samael*, who is termed the *angel of death*. The Jews fabled that into the hands of this chief God had delivered all nations of the earth except the Israelites." That which called forth from our Lord the utterances we



are considering, was the information given Him by Andrew and Philip that certain Greeks were desirous to see Him. Jesus tells them that "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified" (Ver. 23), and then in the 32nd verse says, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw *all men* [Gentiles as well as Jews] unto Me."

The reference then is plainly to the calling of the Gentiles, and the breaking down of "the middle wall of partition" which separated them from the seed of Abraham, by which Jews and Gentiles were to be gathered into one fold. It is only reasonable to suppose, therefore, that in the instance before us our Lord used the appellation, "prince of this world," in the same sense in which He used it on that other occasion when it manifestly applied to Satan. Satan is elsewhere called "the god of this world," and "the prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience." We may fairly conclude, therefore, that when our Lord says, "the prince of this world is judged," He refers to Satan who has usurped the empire of the world, and that his judgment is his condemnation and his expulsion from the throne he has usurped.

"Now is the judgment of this world: now is the prince of this world judged." This was said by our Lord in view of what was about to transpire on Calvary. "The prince of this world" had exerted his dominion to draw the world away from the recognition of God's authority and glory. The Father's name was now to be glorified on earth again, in that His only-begotten Son was to be lifted up from the earth, on the Cross indeed, but "to His THRONE on



the Cross," notwithstanding! And from that throne He was to exert a power that should overthrow Satan and cast him out from the hearts of men, and finally from the world;—a power that should draw this Satan-ruled world back to its proper allegiance to Jehovah.

There is nothing [says the Rev. Wye Smith, in a brief newspaper comment on this passage] of judicial trial and condemnation in this verse. It is not that the world shall be judged, as it shall be judged at the last day. If the word *crisis* had been as thoroughly recognized among us as a word of our own language, three centuries ago, as it is now, it would have been used here, instead of the word *judgment*. For that is the original word here (*krisis*).

It just means this: That now the time had come when it should be seen whether Christ was to accomplish His mission to this earth, or whether Satan should be victorious. The crisis of this world's affairs had arrived! We have to thank God that when the crisis came Jesus defeated Satan and his plans, and made it possible, by His Atonement, for all men to be saved. (1 Tim. 2:4.)

#### JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD

Christ is now enthroned above the world, and with His own blood, has purchased the right to sway the sceptre of supreme authority upon the earth. He has conquered Satan, has judged him, and has potentially cast him out, by the establishment of a new government, a kingdom of righteousness, an everlasting dominion over the sons of men. And in this judgment of Satan is included *the judgment of the world also*. The two are inseparable. "This world," by which we understand those who continue to acknowledge the dominion of Satan, "is judged" in the



judgment of its head, or "prince." And all now who continue in sin do so by a willing or deliberate recognition of Satan as their prince; and accordingly must with him be finally "cast out." Such are deliberate rebels against the authority of heaven, they are already judged and condemned, and are awaiting the execution of the sentence which shall cast them forever from God's glorious presence.

In the year 1860 a rebellion broke out in this nation. Jefferson Davis was its chief representative, or head. He became instrumental in organizing a confederation of States with a view to destroying the Union. Abraham Lincoln, the Chief Executive of our nation, found it necessary to issue a proclamation of war to crush the rising rebellion, and to defeat and overthrow the usurper and traitor. The sovereign voice of the nation, expressed in the issue of the long and bloody conflict, judged Davis as a rebel and traitor. His judgment involved the judgment of all who were confederate with him in his act of rebellion. They were involved in treason as well as he. When the usurper was judged he was cast out of the seat of authority he had usurped. The rebellion and all connected with it were cast out. Only by a process of Reconstruction were those who had rebelled restored to the rights of citizenship.

Satan is the prince and leader of an organized rebellion against the government of God. His first rebellion was in heaven, from whence he was cast out and fell like lightning, drawing down from that fair world all who were confederate with him. He next attempted to establish a kingdom in this world which should rival the kingdom of God. He was more art-



ful than in his first rebellion, and seemed for a time to have accomplished his purpose. But when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His only begotten Son into our world, to judge this arch-traitor of the universe, to wrest the dominion of the world from him, and to cast out the chief of this rebellion with all of his confederates. The battle for the sovereignty of this world culminated in the crucifixion, which, though a seeming victory for Satan, was really his judgment and his overthrow. "Through death Christ destroyed [*rendered powerless*] him that had the power of death" (Heb. 2:14). Having through death destroyed the power of Satan, our Lord arose from the dead—an Almighty Prince and Conqueror!

The prince of this rebellion is now judged, and by judicial sentence cast out. The full execution of the sentence is delayed that God may carry out His purposes of grace toward the children of men who are involved in this judgment. Christ is reconstructing God's government over this world, and offers an amnesty to all who have rebelled, provided they will renounce their allegiance to the prince who has led them in their rebellion against God, confess their guilt, and accept Him who was crucified for the world's redemption as their King and Savior. Christ, by His death, has made their reconciliation to God possible. By His resurrection from the dead He has proven His ability to save and His right to reign. And having ascended on high, that He might conduct the affairs of this world from a higher level and by an invisible spiritual agency, He has sent forth the Holy Spirit to convince the world of sin, righteous-



ness, and judgment, that, being thus convinced, men may be persuaded to accept His overtures, be liberated from the dominion of Satan, and thus escape the final judgment which shall cast the prince of darkness and all who are confederate with him "into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

JUDGMENT RELATED TO THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION  
OF CHRIST

When our Lord says of the Comforter, "He shall convince the world of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged," He evidently has reference to the overthrow of Satan's empire in this world, the casting down of the prince of darkness from his seat of authority over the souls of men, and the final expulsion of the Evil One and all his confederates from this world where he has so long wrought wreck and ruin. When Christ arose from the dead, this judgment of the prince of darkness was effected so far as the demonstration of the fact was concerned. In His resurrection He laid the cornerstone of a new government, and demonstrated His own kingly authority—His everlasting Kingship over this world. The principles of His government are those righteous, spiritual principles which were enunciated by His teaching and illustrated by His life. Accordingly the judgment of this world in the judgment of its prince involves the condemnation of all those selfish principles and forms of worldly life which were introduced by and are characteristic of the reign of Satan. In the light of Christ's doctrine,



life, and death, men are now to be convinced that the prevailing *spirit* of the world is judged and condemned. The selfishness which dictates the factitious manners of the world; the base aims and motives of worldly minds; and all the evil thoughts and ways of unregenerate men; are condemned by that standard of living and motive of action which Christ established as the foundation principle of His Kingdom. All, therefore, who are under the dominion of selfishness, pride, hatred, covetousness, lust, or love of the world, are still under the dominion of Satan, and that from deliberate choice; hence they are in the same judgment and condemnation with the prince of darkness, to whom they yield their willing allegiance. The full conviction of this awful truth is a conviction which the Holy Ghost alone can produce in the souls of men.



## XVIII

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS COMFORTER CONVICTING OF JUDGMENT—CONTINUED

In this conviction, which makes men know and feel that if they continue to live in sin, they are

#### WITHOUT EXCUSE

they have a sense of being condemned already, and of being kept out of hell only by the longsuffering of God. The Gospel reveals this truth—by the impression of the Spirit men are made to feel and realize it. Thus they are convinced that the ruling spirit of the world is condemned, inasmuch as “the prince of this world is judged;” and that not to believe in Christ and obey the Gospel, identifies them with the prince of this world, as his willing subjects, and as heirs with him of the wrath of God. The condemnation of the world turns on its refusal to believe in Christ, on its rejection of the light which He imparts, and on its choice of those principles and motives which He has judged and condemned.

This explains the meaning of such Scriptures as the following:

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not be-



lieved in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. (John 3:17-21.)

The word here translated condemnation is the same word which is rendered judgment in the passage we are considering in this chapter. Again:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. (1 John 2:15-17.)

And again:

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. (James 4:4.)

Since the prince of this world is judged, those who submit to his dominion and are controlled by the principles of his government are also judged as God's enemies, and are involved in the same fearful condemnation as the prince under whose dominion they are serving.

#### EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THIS CONVICTION

While to those who are under his dominion the conviction that "the prince of this world is judged"



is designed to produce terror and sorrow, the same revelation and assurance are "glad tidings" to those who have escaped from his thralldom and have been reconciled to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

A glad sight was it to the children of Israel when they saw the host of Pharaoh swallowed up by the waters of the Red Sea. Thus, when the children of our spiritual Israel have been convinced of sin and of righteousness by the Comforter, when they have thus been brought to loathe the land of sin and to fly from it, He delivers them from the fear of their pursuers by convincing them that Pharaoh and all his host, the prince of this world, and his whole legion of sins, have been swallowed up for those who believe in Christ and are clothed with His righteousness, in the blood which flowed from the Cross. "Glad tidings" indeed must this be, glad and comfortable tidings, so that they who are convinced thereof are ready to cry out in the words of Miriam: "Sing ye to the Lord! for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." Yes, Death, and the pale horse Sin—pale and ghostly now that it is seen in its true colors—hath He cast down and buried forever in His victorious grave.\*

In judging the prince of this world and casting him out, our Lord achieved for all who believe on Him the complete conquest of sin—that power by which Satan rules his subjects. In this judgment of Satan He gave the pledge that sin should be forever cast out from the souls of all His saints—of all who become partakers of His glorious redemption. In this also is the ground and guarantee, not only of their reconciliation to God, and of their justification before Him, but of their entire sanctification—their full deliverance "from the corruption that is in the world through lust."

\*Archdeacon Hare in "Mission of the Comforter."



## THE GENERAL JUDGMENT

While the conviction of judgment which is wrought by the Comforter does not, as we have seen, primarily have reference to that judicial trial, or that public administration of justice, which is to take place at the end of the world, and which is to appoint the eternal destinies of men, it does, nevertheless, bear a close relation to that final adjustment of the affairs of this world which is usually termed the General Judgment. The judgment which is already passed upon the prince of this world and all his subjects sustains a relation to the final judgment similar to that which the conviction and sentence of a criminal before a civil tribunal sustains to the execution of the sentence pronounced upon him. The convicted criminal is already judged, in the sense of being condemned, and the principles of justice which determine his present condemnation are the same principles of justice which will be magnified in the final execution of judgment upon him. Even so the principles which determine the present judgment and condemnation of the unbelieving world are the very same principles upon which the final judgment of the world will be administered.

In convincing the world of judgment, therefore, the Comforter not only demonstrates the fact that, by the Atonement of Christ, the prince of this world is judged, and that with him all who serve him are placed under judicial sentence also; but beginning with this, He carries on this work of conviction until the minds of men are profoundly impressed with the certainty of a general and final judgment. He so



fully convinces men of a future judgment, that while they continue in their sins, they realize that nothing remains for them but "a certain, fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:27).

Christ taught the doctrine of a General Judgment, and also laid down and illustrated the principles upon which the final judgment of the world is to be administered. The Comforter, in His convictive mission, brings to the remembrance of men these teachings of Christ, and impresses their minds with a profound apprehension of their spiritual import. Under His illumination the world discerns the meaning of Christ's temptation, the purport of His answers to Satan in the wilderness, and the deep significance of those remarkable discriminations in human character with which the Master startled the great and wise men of His day. He shows men that when Christ preferred the publican to the Pharisee, the widow's mites to the abundant offerings of the wealthy, the wretchedness of Lazarus to the affluence of Dives, the tears of "a woman which was a sinner" to the vain works and professions of Simon the Pharisee, He was only revealing and illustrating the principles which will enter into the administration of judgment in the last great day of assize. In that day a cup of cold water having been given in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise fail of its reward; while the man who has bestowed all his goods to feed the poor, and who has given his body to be burned, if he shall be found to have done these things without the love of Christ as the constraining motive, shall have no profit from all his sacrifice. Then the King will say



to those who, prompted by His Spirit, have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick, comforted the sorrowing, and relieved the distressed, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these ye did it unto Me." Likewise to those who have failed in these offices of brotherly love, kindness, and sympathy: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:31-46).

#### THE WORLD'S THEORY OF JUDGMENT REFUTED

In His ministry of conviction the Comforter throws such an illumination upon these teachings of Christ, and so impresses them upon the minds of men, as convincingly to refute the world's theory of judgment, and profoundly to impress the world with the fact, that, in His final judgment of the race, God will not rest His decisions upon those human appearances and differences which are most obvious to men, but will have reference to those hidden motives of action, and to those deep spiritual elements and facts which underlie and account for all human conduct. He will give such an exposition of the doctrine and example of Christ, as will convince the world of judgment, and as will reveal the work of Christ, "not as the broken column which it now appears to be, not a failure, not a humiliating overthrow, but the beginning of a kingdom fair as the sun and everlasting as the heavens."



IN HIS CONVICTION OF JUDGMENT THE SPIRIT ACTS AS  
COMFORTER

In the conviction of judgment, as in the conviction of sin and of righteousness, the Spirit of God also acts as *Comforter*. There could be no experience of real, stable comfort, unless the conviction of judgment were added to the conviction of sin and of righteousness. Until men are convinced of judgment they will not repent. This conviction is the great motive to repentance. Hence St. Paul, in preaching to the philosophers at Athens, said, "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom He hath ordained: whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17: 30, 31). Indeed, the conviction of judgment is wrought by the Comforter to the end that men who are under judgment and condemnation may, by "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," avail themselves of the merciful provision made for their reconciliation to God, and thus be able to stand with meek and humble confidence in the final day adjudication, and when the sentence of the Divine Law shall go forth over all the generations of mankind. To those who, under the conviction of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, cast away the sin of unbelief and give up their hearts and minds to a living faith in Christ, thereby seeking to be clothed with and conformed to His righteousness—to all



## 3. A WORK OF THE AGES

To convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment is not the work of a mere day, but is rather a work of the ages. God never hurries His work in nature or in grace. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. He is building for eternity, therefore He builds after a manner which seems slow to men. He did not create the world in a day, though He might have done so had He thus chosen. Nor does He attempt to work out this great problem of spiritual conviction upon the world in a day, though He doubtless might have suddenly accomplished it, had He chosen to work by other means and with a different end in view.

Such work [says Dr. Joseph Parker] is necessarily slow in its progress. Conviction is the slowest of all work. By its very nature it is both negative and positive; that is to say, it has to penetrate error and prejudice, and actually destroy them, before it can begin its constructive process. This is the very force of the word *ἐλεγχος* as employed by our Lord in this passage,—a word which involves condemnation, remorse, penitence, and better-mindedness and health of soul. Work of this kind is not to be done in a day, for if so done it may be as quickly overthrown. The kingdom of heaven is in nowise to be hurried in its construction, and inasmuch as it is the highest of all kingdoms it is the least susceptible of impatient influences. It resents them. For a time, godly labor will seem to disappear in nothingness and to leave the laborer without reward or joy; but afterwards there will come up signs and tokens which can not be mistaken for aught but the hire and honor of those who do well. Sin, righteousness, and judgment are not to be seen objectively, or the work would be easy enough; they must be revealed subjectively, in much painfulness, self-accusation,



and controversy of heart, for thus only can they become part of our very consciousness, and live forever amidst the ruling memories of human life. Jesus Christ commits His great work to the ages, and to the ministry of the Eternal Spirit, assured that in the long run the world will trace its true ideas of sin, righteousness, and judgment, to the Golgotha of His sorrow and the Olivet of His ascension.\*

\*"The Paraclete."



## XIX

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS COMFORTER IN THE HEARTS OF BELIEVERS

The office-work which the Paraclete executes toward those who have been led by His convictive ministry to believe on Jesus Christ as their Redeemer and Savior is set forth by Jesus Himself in the following words:

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye can not bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. (John 16: 12-15.)

It should be remembered that "the Comforter" of which Jesus is here speaking is not a mere gracious influence distilled from heaven, but God Himself in spiritual operation and manifestation—"the Spirit of truth," "the Holy Ghost," who has come to abide forever in Christian hearts.

Jesus left the world with "many things" unsaid which He wished to communicate to His disciples, and with much of the work undone which was necessary to the complete working out of salvation in the hearts of His people. This work, however, was not to cease. It was to be continued and completed by the agency of the Holy Spirit. By this invisible,



spiritual, and all-powerful agency God manifests Himself *in living personal relation* to all who submit their wills to His will as it is made known to them by conscience, and through the written and the Incarnate Word. This submission to the Divine will is the condition upon which we may receive that peculiar ministry of spiritual guidance and tuition which Jesus ascribes to "the Spirit of truth," and whereby believers are to be perfected in Christian character, and "thoroughly furnished unto every good work."

In the words of Jesus which we are now considering, the ministry of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter of the Church is defined and limited in terms so simple and decisive as to leave no devout and honest inquirer after truth in obscurity as to what the privileges of believers are under the economy of the Spirit.

"HE SHALL NOT SPEAK FROM HIMSELF"

In this statement our Lord has fixed an unalterable limit to the functions the Comforter is to execute in His ministry within the hearts of believers. It is of great importance to understand this in studying the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

What, then, is implied in this limitation? The interpretation usually given to these words of Christ is, that they limit the Spirit in His work of teaching and revelation to testimony regarding the Person and work of Christ—that He shall not speak concerning Himself, but only concerning the Lord Jesus. That the Comforter is under such a limitation is not de-



seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, *and understandeth it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty," etc. (Matt. 13:10-23).

The essential agreement of the Spirit and the Word of God are taught in numerous passages of Holy Writ, only a few of which it is necessary to cite at this time. St. Paul bids the Christian warrior take "the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6:17). This implies that the Word of God is the instrument with which the Spirit executes the Divine purpose. In writing to the Thessalonian Christians, he says: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation *through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*: whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." St. Peter exhorts believers to the exercise of Christian love in the following words: "Seeing ye have purified your souls *in obeying the truth through the Spirit* unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." Thus the apostles give evidence of a distinct apprehension, in their own minds, of the intimate relation and perfect agreement of the Spirit and the Word.

Dr. Joseph Angus, speaking of this agreement, has well expressed a great truth in the following paragraph:

The Spirit of God does not communicate to the mind of even a teachable, obedient, and devout Christian, any doctrine or meaning of Scripture which is not contained already



in Scripture itself. He makes men wise *up to* what is written, but not *beyond* it. When Christ opened the understanding of His apostles, it was "that they might *understand the Scriptures*" (Luke 24:25). When He opened Lydia's heart, she attended to the things that were spoken by *Paul*. David prayed that God would be pleased to open his eyes, that he might behold wondrous things *out of the Divine law*. (Psa. 119:18.) "The Bible, and through the Bible," indicates, therefore, at once, the subject and the method of Divine wisdom. Whatever is taught contrary to it, or in addition, or without its aid, is to be ascribed to the spirit of darkness, or to ourselves.\*

The source of all fanaticism in spiritual things is in overlooking and ignoring the truth in regard to the agreement of the Spirit, in all His office-work, with the written Word of God. All erring enthusiasts lay claim to revelations from the Holy Spirit separate from or in advance of what is written, thus setting aside one of the most important truths declared by Christ, concerning the ministry of the Spirit, *viz.*, that "He shall not speak from Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak."

They do not "understand" the Word on this point, hence they are looking for the Holy Spirit to make revelations of new truth; whereas, He comes not to reveal new truth, but rather to explain the truth already revealed alike through the written and the Incarnate Word. The Spirit reveals the meaning of the Word, and gives the impulse to obey its precepts and requirements. Hence our sanctification is said to be by "obeying the truth through the Spirit." Whoever, therefore, professes to be under the tuition and guidance of the Holy Spirit, while not obeying

\*"Bible Handbook," p. 178.



nied, but that such is the primary teaching of the passage before us, can not be allowed.

The passage in the original is οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἑαυτοῦ, which the Revised Version more properly translates, "*He shall not speak from Himself.*" Taking this as the correct rendering and connecting it with the words of Christ which immediately succeed it, we have the following: "He shall not speak from Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." The latter part of this passage is explanatory of the former. The meaning of the whole seems to be: He shall not act "as a plenipotentiary," but shall conduct Himself as an Ambassador the functions of whose ministry are defined and limited by the Sovereign He represents. He shall not teach anything contrary to what has already been revealed, but shall bear one conjoint testimony with the Father and the Son, in which the honor and glory of the Godhead, and man's salvation are equally concerned. He shall confirm what has already been revealed by adding His own testimony thereto; He shall be the Expositor of the Divine Word by giving it a spiritual illumination in the minds of men. This accords with the statement of Christ as recorded in the 15th verse: "All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I, that He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

The Spirit of God never exceeds the bounds of God's revealed Word in His ministry of teaching and guidance. "He shall not speak from Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." The Spirit is back of the Word. He knows the Word, and uses it to reveal His own character to other minds,



so far as He designs His personal character to be known. This method of operation, and this relation and manifestation of the Word and Spirit, are in accordance with the constitutional method of mental development. In the human as in the Divine mind, the Word represents the intelligence. The Word, or Logos, is the conceived and expressed thought or outbirth of the mind. But back of the intellect, which is the source of the Word, is the spirit, or that part of our being in which resides our consciousness. The spirit is the knowing part of our being. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11). In accordance, therefore, with this natural order in both the human and the Divine minds, the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God—both the written and the Incarnate Word—to reveal the Divine character and will, and to redeem and sanctify those who believe. Hence, it is the Divine order that men should be "sanctified by the Spirit," but "sanctified through the truth" as revealed in the written, and manifested by the Incarnate Word of God.

As fuel is a prerequisite of fire, so truth received into the understanding is a prerequisite of the permanent and perfect work of the Spirit in the heart of man. This principle is illustrated by our Lord in the parable of the sower. "When any one heareth the Word of the kingdom, and *understandeth it not*, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received



seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, *and understandeth it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty," etc. (Matt. 13: 10-23).

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\*"Bible Handbook," p. 178.



the Word of God by a life of labor for the glory of the Master and for the good of men, is an enthusiast. It is only when we "abide" in Christ by faith, and His "words abide in us" by understanding and as a law of life and action, that we manifest discipleship with Him by "bringing forth much fruit."

It seems as though our Lord foresaw the tendency there would be, under the spiritual dispensation He was soon to inaugurate, for men of weak understanding or of superficial experience in spiritual things, to dishonor and reproach the doctrine of the Holy Spirit by plunging into fanatical excess and madness under the pretended guidance of the Comforter; and that He therefore fixed the boundary within which the Spirit should perform His whole ministry of teaching and guidance so plainly that none need make any injurious or fatal mistake at this point.

#### SPIRITUAL TEACHING

"He shall teach you all things, and shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." The peculiar ministry of the Spirit herein set forth doubtless had a more particular application to the apostles of our Lord than to the Church as a whole, so far as its literal fulfilment was concerned; yet the same principles of spiritual quickening and tuition, which were manifested in the fulfilment of this promise, also characterize the ministry of the Comforter to a goodly measure (though under a difference of manifestation) in the minds of all believers, in all ages of the world. It therefore con-



cerned not the disciples alone, but is of supreme consequence to the Church of God to-day.

In its primary application this language contained a promise of *inspiration* for the understanding and of *quickenings* for the memory of our Lord's apostles, to whom was committed the work of completing the Scripture canon and of establishing the Church of the New Covenant. Jesus had given them the germ of "all truth" essential to the edification and perfecting of the Church. The Holy Ghost, in His teaching ministry, would enlarge their understanding, developing the broader meaning of the Master's teachings and enabling them to see, in its broad and complete development, the relation of "all truth" to Christ its Author, and to the redemption, sanctification, and glorification of His Church.

This inspiration of understanding and memory in regard to the truth which Christ had taught, was manifested in the apostles on the day of Pentecost. What they had formerly failed to understand was now made perfectly clear to them, and through them to others; and the things which had been forgotten were now brought freshly to their memory, even to the minutest details, to be no more forgotten. The Book of Acts contains the record of the fulfilment of this promise made by our Lord to His early disciples. The inspiration of memory is manifested in the writing of the four Gospels, which exhibit a marvelous minuteness of recollection and vividness of detail to be accounted for only by the quickening ministry of the Holy Ghost. The inspiration of understanding is more fully exhibited in the epistolary writings of the apostles, wherein the deepest



meaning of Christ's words is apprehended, and set forth in a system of doctrines and precepts comparable to a stately and magnificent temple built on an immutable foundation, and supported by many pillars of matchless strength and beauty. Under the inspiration and quickening of the Holy Ghost the apostles of our Lord were constantly living over again that scene of which Jesus Christ had been the center during His earthly ministry, and were being taught how to gather up the apparent fragments of truth which He had left them here and there, and construct them into a perfect and glorious system, that nothing, however minute, should be lost.

This opening of the understanding and this quickening of the memory are in a goodly measure characteristic of the Holy Spirit's work in ALL believers. Not that they are all inspired to the same degree and end that the apostles were, who were to write the history of the Savior's life and death—a work which required that special Divine teaching and quickening promised by our Lord, to qualify them for its performance,—but they are furnished with this inspiration in a degree sufficient to guard them against all damaging error, and to prepare them for all the responsibilities and emergencies of Christian life and service.

The "unction" or "anointing" of the Holy Ghost is given to this very end. Hence St. John, in his First Epistle, addresses those who are children of God as follows: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (2:20). And again: "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received



of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (2:26, 27). The plain meaning of this language is, that the unction of the Holy Spirit is bestowed for the purpose of spiritual teaching and illuminating, to produce clear and quick discrimination between truth and error, and thus to afford the surest safeguard against the corruption of believers by false doctrines and seducing spirits.

The Scriptures themselves [says Jeremy Taylor] are written by the Spirit of God, yet they are written within and without; and besides the light that shines upon the face of them, unless there be light shining within our hearts, unfolding the leaves, and interpreting the mysterious sense of the Spirit, convincing our consciousness and preaching to our hearts, to look for Christ in the leaves of the Gospel is to look for the living among the dead. There is a life in them, but that life is, according to St. Paul's expression, "hid with Christ in God," and unless the Spirit of God draw it forth, we shall not be able.

## DIVINE GUIDANCE

"He will guide you into all truth." The Paraclete is not only a Teacher but a Guide. In both these respects the ministry of the Spirit is an accommodation to human weakness—a wise and beneficent adaptation to the necessities of human experience. Man is ignorant, hence he needs to be taught in spiritual things. He is also weak and erring, hence he needs a wise and powerful guide to lead him through the difficult path of life. In his earthly experience



the believer in Christ is in the imperfect spiritual state which is symbolized by childhood; hence, the need of the Father's counsel to instruct, and of the Father's hand to guide him in his feebleness and imperfection. In the gift of the Holy Spirit to the believer both of these necessities are met. By His ministry the counsel and will of God, as revealed in His Word, are made light to the understanding and life of the soul; and by His gracious operation in the heart, the will and the ability to walk in the light of God's counsel is produced. He teaches us "all things" necessary to salvation by a mighty spiritual illumination, and then "guides us into all truth" necessary to our completeness or perfection in Christ, by gracious and powerful spiritual drawings and impulses.

As a father takes the hand of his child and leads him along the difficult and dangerous way, so the Holy Spirit tenderly and safely leads the humble, trustful soul in the way of truth and holiness. He leads the believer away from error, and leads him to a saving knowledge of the truth. As the soul of man animates his body and regulates all its operations and movements, so the Spirit of God touches and animates the soul of the believer; operates in and through it; regulates its volitions, affections, and operations; reveals to it, through the eye of its faith, the things of Christ and of God, as the means of molding it into the Divine image, "from glory to glory," as it attains to one degree of knowledge after another; thus guiding it ever on in that upward way of truth whose summit is the throne of God.

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be;" for now



we only "know in part," and the measure of our life and holiness is limited by the measure of our spiritual knowledge. "But we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Then, the fulness of our knowledge of Christ and of God in Christ, will give us the completed life of love and blessedness, of holiness and heaven. In the Spirit's work as a Teacher He gives inspiration to the understanding and to the memory. In His ministry of guidance He gives inspiration to the will, the motives, and the affections. Under this inspiration the soul continually ascends toward God, the Fountain of "all truth;" and, in its spiritual ascension, it is more and more transfigured into the same image, until, at last, it awakens in the full likeness of its Lord, and is satisfied. (Psa. 18:15.)

It is true [says Archbishop Fenelon] that we are continually inspired, and that we do not lead a gracious life, except so far as we act under this interior inspiration. But, O God! how few Christians feel it! how few are they who do not annihilate it by their voluntary distractions, or by their resistance!

That the Spirit guides the believer and the Church of God in this way, that is, by an interior inspiration and drawing, seems to be implied in those Scriptures in which the nature of the New Covenant is set forth: "I will put My laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people" (Heb. 8:10). "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them" (Ezek. 36:27). The plain import of these passages is that God, by the indwelling



and operation of the Holy Spirit, will so reveal to us His laws, His truth, His character, that they shall become ruling forces in our moral nature.

In the written Word of God truth is revealed in "the letter," which is its outward, visible symbol; in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, it is presented in concrete form, personified, exemplified, and made exceeding beautiful, though still outward, and visible; "in the Person of the Holy Ghost it is inward, spiritual, and all transfiguring." As the pilot within the vessel guides its course across the pathless sea and into the remote and quiet harbor, so the Spirit of God, enthroned in the believer's heart, guides him over the tempestuous sea of life, enabling him to steer clear of the shoals and rocks of error, and, by a spiritual, holy, and "well-nigh infallible instinct," to pursue the way of truth and righteousness until he passes within the vail, whither his anchor is already cast.

#### THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

It is worthy of special note that, in the Scripture we are considering, our Lord designates the Comforter as τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, "the Spirit of truth." Truth is a complete and indivisible quantity; and, in its essence, "all truth" is spiritual and theological. That is, "all truth" primarily and ultimately relates to God, who is a Spirit. Solar light is one and indivisible in essence, but its manifestations are various and numerous. All forms and manifestations of natural light are traceable primarily and ultimately to the solar flame. But light, through a unit, is an



inclusive element, and embraces lights of various degrees and kinds. Even so "all truth," while one in essence, is nevertheless generic and inclusive, embracing many truths of various kinds. The truths of physical science are branches of the one great system which includes "all truth." The truths of revelation, or of theological science, are higher branches of the same system. Between the truths of science and of revelation, therefore, there can never be any real conflict, since they are substantially the same, belonging to and composing one complete and indivisible system of truth.

There must also be one common center in which they meet and wherein they unite; and, as the common center of union among the branches is the heart of the vine which produced them, so the common center of "all truth" is the infinite heart of Him from whom "all truth" proceeds and of whose character it is the reflection and manifestation. Truth, considered in its all-comprehensive relations to the universe of mind and matter, is a manifold manifestation or revelation of that only infinite, eternal, independent, intelligent, and causative Power, the existence of which the best Philosophy of this cultured age declares, and whom revelation designates as God. In other words all truth proceeds from God, and is in some sense a manifestation of Him. Physical truth shows us the hand of God in its wonder-working power. That system of revelation which centers in the Incarnation shows us the face of God beaming with that love which redeemed the world, and radiant with the matchless glory of Divine holiness. The Holy Ghost, as the indwelling Comforter, Teacher,



Guide, and Sanctifier of believers, takes them into the holy of holies, shows them the very heart of God, the prime original Fountain of all truth and holiness, and changes them "into the same image, from glory to glory," until, partaking His nature and conformed to His likeness, they "know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent," which knowledge is "eternal life" (John 1:3).

In the whole history of revealed religion there has been "a progressive movement toward spirituality." God has been endeavoring to bring His Church, in the successive dispensations, to that perfect spiritual state into which all who enter may see God, know Him, and commune with Him, without the aid of any such medium as ritual, type, or symbol, but by an invisible, substantial, and purely spiritual manifestation. The dispensation of the Spirit is the culmination of this "progressive movement toward spirituality." Toward this culmination, toward this internal manifestation of God to His Church by the Holy Spirit, the progressive revelation of truth has tended through all the ages. To this end the Holy Ghost inspired the Scriptures, and to this end He has been for ages working out the interpretation of the same, employing the light of Science, Philosophy, and History to give the world a clearer, fuller exposition of inspired truth. The Holy Ghost, then, is the ultimate Essence, the infinite Fountain or Source, the original Revealer, and the only infallible Interpreter, as well as the ultimate End, of "all truth." Hence the propriety with which our Lord designates Him as "*the Spirit of truth.*"

The Holy Ghost, as "the Spirit of truth," will



“guide” believers “into all truth.” He only is competent for this task. Truth, as revealed in the Bible, or, as embodied in Jesus Christ, is a temple having its outer court, its inner sanctuary, and its holy of holies, corresponding with the sensibilities, the intellect, and the spirit of man. But only He who is “the Spirit of truth” can lead us into the holy of holies of that great temple, and there reveal to our spirits the spirituality of “all truth.” This is the work which Jesus Christ, at His departure from the world, commissioned the Paraclete to perform. Hence His words: “I have yet many things to say unto you; but ye can not bear them now. Howbeit, when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth.”

The process must needs be a gradual one by which the Church should be advanced from its feeble, infant state to “the full knowledge of the truth,” and “unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Christ could, doubtless, have given His followers the full revelation of Divine things while He was with them, but they were not able to bear it. They must be instructed by degrees, and led gently and gradually in that upward road of truth, the summit of which is hidden in the glory of the great white throne. Hence the promise, “He will *guide* you,” etc., which implies a gentle and gradual leading forward of the Church of God to that full knowledge of the truth in which perfection is attained.

The method of the Spirit’s operation as here defined, presupposes what has already been intimated—that the *consent and coöperation* of those who are subjects of this gracious guidance and tuition is in-



dispensable. The Holy Spirit guides only those who consent to His guidance, and who desire to know the truth that they may walk therein. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." "The meek will He guide in judgment;" and, "the meek will He teach His way."

#### RESPONSIBILITY FOR MISSING THE TRUTH

If we miss truth [says Jeremy Taylor] it is because we will not find it; for certain it is, that all truth which God hath made necessary, He hath also made legible and plain; and if we will open our eyes we shall see the sun, and if "we will walk in the light, we shall rejoice in the light." Only let us withdraw the curtains, let us remove the impediments, "and the sin that doth so easily beset us." That is God's way. Every man must, in his station, do that portion of duty which God requires of him, and then shall he be taught of God all that is fit for him to learn; there is no other way for him but this.

The Spirit of the Lord is "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11:2); and in His guidance of God's people He operates "by secret inspirations, by proper arguments, by actual persuasions, by personal applications, by effects and energies;" all of which operations, to be effectual, must have the cheerful consent and constant coöperation of the soul whom the Spirit would guide into an experimental knowledge of the truth. This receptiveness to the Spirit's interior teaching and prompting is the principal demonstration of sonship in the family of God. "For as many



as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

The ultimate end of all truth is man's perfection in holiness. And the sphere of the Spirit's operation in guiding believers "into all truth" is bounded by those truths which are essential to that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." The work of the Spirit in teaching Christ's followers "all things and bringing all things to their remembrance" which the Master had "said unto them," refers to His operation in their *understanding*; but His ministry in "*guiding* them into all truth" seems rather to relate to their personal sanctification through the truth—to "the perfecting of the saints, to the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12, 13). This is in accordance with our Lord's prayer for His followers, at the close of the discourse in which the distinctive mission of the Comforter was announced:

Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me. (John 17:17-23.)



This is the spiritual summit toward which "all truth" leads the way. To the attainment of this "the Spirit of truth" will ultimately guide every true and faithful believer. And from this spiritual eminence the Church of Christ, made glorious and spotless in holiness, will eternally manifest "to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God."

No man, however, can scale the mount of holiness and reach the summit of spiritual perfection by dint of his own volition and effort, nor by the knowledge which comes from study and the exercise of reason. A Divine Guide is infinitely more necessary to him who would make this spiritual ascent, than is a native guide to the traveler from a foreign land who would journey to the summit of the Alps. To bring us to this high attainment Christ ascended up on high and procured for us the ministry of the Divine Comforter—the Holy Ghost. Now, every one who would reach the sublime heights of perfection in holiness must receive and enthrone the Holy Spirit in his heart as an absolute Teacher and Guide. He does not come to share His ministry with others, but to be supreme and absolute within the sphere assigned Him. Hence the necessity of relying on the Holy Spirit, and the folly also of relying on anything else which men are prone to substitute for the Spirit of God.

#### THE SECRET OF DIVINE PHILOSOPHY

Every man [says Jeremy Taylor] understands more of religion by his affections than by his reason. It is not the



wit of the man, but the spirit of the man; not so much his head as his heart that learns the Divine Philosophy. \* \* \*

Human learning brings excellent ministries towards this; it is admirably useful for the reproof of heresies, for the detection of fallacies, for the letter of the Scriptures, for collateral testimonies, for exterior advantages; but there is something beyond this, that human learning without the addition of the Divine can never reach.

A good man, though unlearned in secular knowledge, is like the windows of the temple, narrow without and broad within; he sees not so much of what profits not abroad, but whatsoever is within and concerns religion and the glorification of God, that he sees with a broad inspection; but all human learning with God is but blindness and folly. One man discourses of the sacrament, another receives Christ; one discourses for or against transubstantiation; but the good man feels himself to be changed, and so joined to Christ, that he only understands the true sense of transubstantiation, while he becomes to Christ bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh, and of the same spirit with his Lord.

From holiness we have the best instruction. For that which we are taught by the Holy Spirit of God, this new nature, this vital principle within us, it is that which is worth our learning; not vain and empty, idle and insignificant notions, in which, when you have labored till your eyes are fixed in their orbs, and your flesh unfixed from its bones, you are no better and no wiser. If the Spirit of God be your Teacher, He will teach you such truths as will make you know and love God, become like Him, and enjoy Him forever, by passing from similitude to union and eternal fruition.



## XX

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS COMFORTER IN THE HEARTS OF BELIEVERS—CONTINUED

#### PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE

“He will show you things to come.” By the gift of the indwelling Paraclete the Church of Christ is fully and adequately furnished for all the vicissitudes of her future experience. The word ἀναγγελεῖ, translated “He will show,” does not necessarily imply prophetic revelation. It means as well to announce, to give notice, to advise, to inform, to set forth, to teach. The word in its present connection seems to convey the idea of imparting instruction regarding the new and perplexing problems which the Church of Christ or individual Christians may be called to meet as the ages come and go.

The title, Paraclete (translated *Comforter* in the Authorized Version), means, as we have previously noted, an Advocate, or Counselor. It is in His office as the Counselor of the Church that the Paraclete “will show [her] things to come.” He will explain the events of the future as they come to pass. He will give the wisdom and ability to deal with the most perplexing problems and difficulties that may arise. He will prepare the Church for successfully withstanding the ever-varying assaults of her enemies through the lapse of ages. He will enable her



to adapt herself and her methods of operation to the changes effected by the flight of time and by the increase of knowledge and civilization. He will give that keenness and clearness of spiritual perception which will enable her to see God everywhere, and to behold in the darkest and most calamitous events that may issue from the womb of futurity the working out of Redemption's consummation.

As a parent or guardian would show a child in his advance toward maturity how to deal with each of the many perplexing problems incident to his development as they are encountered, so the Holy Ghost, as the Guardian, Guide, and Teacher of the Church, will prepare her for successfully meeting and grappling with all the perplexing circumstances incident to her future development. Christ had many things to say unto His followers while He was with them. Hence, after His departure He would "give them another Comforter," who should "abide with them forever."

This abiding Comforter would "teach them all things," would "guide them into all truth," and would "show them things to come."

In all this ministry the Comforter would consider the weak and undeveloped condition of the followers of Christ, and would lead and instruct them as they were able to bear, and as the emergencies of the future should demand. As "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord," He would ever dwell in the Church through dwelling in the hearts of individual believers, making them "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord," and ef-



fecting a supernatural preparedness for dealing with future events as they should be unfolded with the flight of centuries. Jesus would have His followers know that the Comforter who was to abide with them and in them, would give them all needed wisdom in experiences of trial and perplexity. This interpretation of the words, "He will show you things to come," is in accord with the words of Jesus on another occasion:

And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. (Matt. 10: 18-20.)

Among the whole category of assurances given by our Lord in connection with the promise of the Comforter, none is better adapted to comforting, enriching, and stimulating the Church through all the vicissitudes of time, than the declaration, "He will show you things to come," if it be considered in the broad sense of enabling her to understand and deal with whatever the future may develop. But if we limit this promise to the prophetic inspiration given to the apostles and immediate hearers of our Lord, as many commentators are inclined to do, its value to the Church in later ages is greatly impaired. Merely to "show the things to come" in a prophetic sense, or as a supernatural prevision, is less a ground of assurance and comfort to the Church than to know that, by the gift of the indwelling Paraclete, she is thoroughly furnished for all the emergencies of her



future warfare. The assurance of having wisdom and ability given in every extremity and sufficient for every emergency that may arise, is an advantage and comfort to the Church greater than human language can express. This assurance our Lord has given. The future success and triumph of the Church is guaranteed by the gift of the indwelling Comforter. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early" (Psa. 46:5).

The Holy Ghost did "show things to come" in a prophetic sense to the Church of the apostolic age. Some of the apostles and early followers of our Lord received the gift of prophetic inspiration and revelation; and, through them, the Church of later ages has been favored with a prevision of some of the great events and crises of futurity. The field of New Testament prophecy extends to the close of the present dispensation, and antedates the dawn of earth's millennial morn. Through that extended field are outlined, though dimly, the successive epochs of struggle and conflict through which the Church of God must win her way to final and everlasting triumph. Paul, and John, and Peter, under Divine inspiration, have each in a measure drawn aside the veil that conceals the future, and given us a prevision of "things to come." Nor is the vision one that should be an occasion of alarm. On the other hand, it is designed to inspire faith, courage, zeal, and assurance,—to confirm the faith of the Church in the declaration of Christ, that "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

This prophetic showing of "things to come" was evidently included in the promise of our Lord now



under consideration. It doubtless is one of the means or methods by which the Comforter prepares the Church in every age for coming experiences of trial and warfare. To limit this promise, however, to such communications, is to make its significance and value become less and less to the Church of God as the centuries of history come and go. But if we consider the promise in the more general sense of an assurance to the Church, that, by the ministry of the *abiding* Comforter, she shall be given all needed wisdom and understanding in every emergency of her career, and shall be taught how to deal with each new and perplexing problem which the future may present, its significance and value become greater instead of less, as the Church moves onward in her militant course.

As a matter of fact the Church is not gifted with inspired prevision, only as she is furnished with a somewhat vague outline of the future in the books of the New Testament. Considering this fact, and seeing that the Comforter is to "abide with her forever," we are brought to the conclusion that the promise, "He will show you things to come," has particular reference to a supernatural endowment of wisdom—a Divine preparedness of mind and heart—for dealing with the perplexing and difficult events and experiences of the future as they come to pass. Taking this view of our Lord's words, they furnish believers in every age with "an all-sufficient assurance, that whatever may come, and with what violence soever its coming may be attended, the Church will be prepared to withstand every shock and to surmount every difficulty."



This promise concerning the ministry of the Comforter applies to the experience of the individual believer, as well as to the Church collectively. No follower of Christ knows what experiences are before him. Could we know all that is in reserve for us in the future, the effect would probably be disastrous. The Savior could not make the disclosures He would gladly have made to His disciples while He was with them, because they were not then able to bear them. Nor could we bear, in our present experience, the disclosure of what the future has in store for us. Had we foreseen ten years ago the conflicts, trials, crosses, losses, sufferings, and tribulation experiences which have fallen to our portion during the past year, it is doubtful if one Christian in a hundred could have endured the effect of such a prevision. But when the difficulties have appeared one by one, they have, by faith, and through the help of the blessed Comforter, been surmounted. All needed wisdom has been given for each emergency that has arisen.

The promise of Christ, given on another occasion, but respecting the ability which should be supplied to His followers for meeting and dealing with the difficult problems of the future, is: "I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist" (Luke 21: 15).

"Out of this assurance comes rest; the future is no longer a trouble; the clouds that lie upon the horizon will be scattered by the brightness of the image of God."



## GLORIFIES CHRIST

*"He shall glorify Me."* In all His offices toward the children of men the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ. The redeeming work of Christ is the common ground upon which He appeals to and invites the attention of all mankind. His ministry in conviction, teaching, guidance, is wholly identified with the name and ministry of Jesus. He manifests the glory of Christ and of His redemptive work to the children of men, so that He who once was "despised and rejected of men" no longer appears as "a root out of dry ground having no form or comeliness," but rather as "the *Branch* of the Lord, beautiful and glorious," and whose "fruit is excellent and comely" (Isa. 4:2).

What is meant [says Dr. Joseph Parker] by glorifying Christ Jesus? We know what is meant by the sun glorifying the earth. Let us familiarize ourselves with that process, as it most completely represents the spiritual idea now under consideration. The sun does not *create* the landscape. The mountain and the sea are just as high and wide in the grey, cold dawn as at noonday. The sun adds nothing to the acreage of the meadows or the stature of the rocks. Yet how wonderful is the work of the sun! Look upon the earth in the pale dawn, and watch the ministry of the sun from hour to hour. How the light strikes the hill, burnishes the sea, flushes the trembling dew, and makes the blossoming bush burn as if with the presence of God! Everything was there before, yet how transfigured by the ministry of light! The commonest things are made almost beautiful by that benign service, and as for the higher forms of culture it would seem as if one more flash of sunshine would make them as the angels of God. In this respect, what light is to the earth, the Holy Ghost is to Jesus Christ. The Savior is glorified by the Spirit. The work of the Spirit is revelation, not creation. He does not make Christ, He explains Him.



The sun in doing all his wonderful work does not speak of himself; he will not, indeed, allow us to look at him. If we turn our eyes upon him the rebuke is prompt and intolerable. The language of that rebuke is—Look at the earth, not at me; see the opportunity for service and culture which is given you; do not intrude upon my tabernacle, but work within your own sphere while it is called day. The Holy Ghost, in like manner, does not speak of Himself. He will not answer all our inquiries respecting His personality. We can not venture with impunity beyond a well-defined line. To the very last men will inquire, What is the Holy Ghost? showing that all attempts at exhaustive definition have ended in failure and disappointment. Yet whilst He Himself is the Eternal Secret, His work is open and glorious, His text is Christ. From that theme He never strays. To the individual consciousness He reveals the mystery of the beauty of Christ. The Christian student sees a Christ which he did not see twenty years ago—the same, yet not the same; larger, grander, tenderer, every day; a new music in His speech, an ampler sufficiency in His grace; a deeper humiliation in His cradle, a keener agony in His cross. This increasing revelation is the work of the Holy Ghost, and is the fulfilment of Jesus Christ's own promise. That the Son of Mary should have claimed the Holy Ghost as His interpreter! Observe this is an incidental contribution towards the completeness and harmony of the mystery that is embodied in Christ Jesus. Regarded in this light it is very wonderful. The beginning and the end are the same,—equal in mystery, in condescension, in solemn grandeur. Thus: "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost,"—this is the *beginning*; "He shall not speak of Himself, He shall glorify Me,"—this is the *end*: are the tones discordant? The *incarnation* of the Son of God was the work of the Holy Ghost; how natural that the *explanation* of the Son of God should be the work of the same minister! As He was before the visible Christ, so He was to be after Him, and thus the whole mystery never passed from His own control.

The life of the Son of man, as it is written in the Gospels, *needs* to be glorified. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: He had



not where to lay His head: He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off His hair: He made Himself of no reputation; He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor: upon all this chasm, so deep, so grim, we need a light above the brightness of the sun. When that light comes the root out of a dry ground will be as the flower of Jesse and the plant of renown, and the face marred more than any man's will be the fairest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely. Such is the wizardry of light!\*

Throughout all His ministry of *conviction* the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ. Does He convince men of sin? It is of the sin of not believing in Christ. Does He convince them of righteousness? It is of the spotless, perfect, and everlasting righteousness of Jesus Christ; of that righteousness which was made manifest in Christ's ascension to the Father, and which He received that He might communicate it to all who should believe on Him. Does He convince the world of judgment? It is by convincing them that the prince of this world has been judged by the life and death of Christ; and that his judgment, (*condemnation*) involves the judgment or condemnation of all who submit to his dominion. In all these instances Christ is glorified. All that the Comforter shows men in working out this threefold conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment, relates to and glorifies the life and work of the Incarnate Son of God.

The Holy Spirit also glorifies Christ Jesus in *bearing witness* to His Messiahship, and to His Sonship with God. "When the Comforter is come," said

\*"The Paraclete," pp. 99-102.



Jesus, "whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning" (John 15: 26, 27). The Holy Ghost did bear concurrent witness with the apostles of our Lord, by enabling them to perform miracles in the name of the Son of God, thereby confirming their testimony, and making it prevalent against the prejudice and hostility of Jews and Gentiles. There was an imperative demand for such a confirmation and authentication of the testimony borne by the Apostolic Church.

The Holy Ghost testifies of Christ, not only by those sensuous miracles whereby He authenticated and confirmed the testimony of the founders of Christianity, but by the *spiritual miracles* which He now works wherever Christ is preached. The healing of the sick, the cleansing of the lepers, the raising of the dead were "signs" to demonstrate the ability and authority of Jesus to redeem the souls of men from sin and its attendant evils, and were types also of the spiritual restoration, spiritual completeness, and spiritual immortality which He effects in all who believe on Him. The regeneration and sanctification of sinful souls is what the age of sensuous miracles aimed at and signified. The greatest of all miracles is THE NEW MAN!

"A healed leper may appear to be a greater miracle than a renewed soul, but in reality, in comparison, he is hardly a miracle at all!" To hush a raging tempest and calm a roaring sea in an instant, and by a single command, is a stupendous miracle, but



to quicken a dead soul and give settled peace to “a mind diseased,” is a miracle the sublimity of which surpasses everything else in the history of the universe. “If any man be in Christ He is a new creation [κτίσις]; old things have passed away, and behold, all things have become new.” *This is the great, the supreme miracle!* Jesus Christ miraculously restored the halt, the blind, the palsied, the maimed, the deaf, the dumb, the leprous, the dead—“a *non possumus list*” in the truest sense. But the Holy Ghost restores to virtue and to holiness, “fornicators, idolaters, thieves, drunkards, revilers, extortioners,” and those who are “foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another;” a list of which, for helplessness and hopelessness, the former one is but a faint similitude!

#### REVEALS THE THINGS OF CHRIST

“He shall receive of the things of Mine and shall show them unto you.” By “the things” of Christ we are to understand particularly His grace and truth. “The law was given by Moses,” as the mediator of the Old Covenant; “but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,” as the Mediator of the New Covenant. Christ, as a Mediator, is the great Treasurer of heavenly things, to whom all the wisdom, truth, and grace which God would make known to the sons of men are intrusted, and through whom they are manifested and communicated to the subjects of redemption. The Holy Spirit is the immediate Agent by whom they are revealed and communicated to the



believing soul. As Christ showed the things of the Father, so the Holy Spirit shows us the things of Jesus Christ. This is one of the ways in which the Spirit glorifies the Son.

A beautiful illustration of the Spirit's work in glorifying Christ by showing "the things" of Christ to the believer, is found in Genesis 24:31-37. It is the instance of Abraham's servant seeking a bride for Isaac, his master's son. When he came to the house of Bethuel, in Mesopotamia, whose daughter Rebekah he desired to win for Isaac, he would not eat until he had made known his errand. "And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great; and He hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah, my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old, and *unto him hath he given all that he hath*," etc. Then followed a rehearsal of the Providential guidance by which the servant had been brought to the house of Bethuel, and by which Rebekah had been designated as the future wife of Isaac. Upon these grounds he presented and urged his suit.

Notice, that Abraham's servant claimed no attention to himself—his whole concern was for Isaac, whom he represented. Note also the manner in which he sought to win Rebekah as a bride for his master's son. He rehearsed the dealings of the Lord with Abraham—the greatness, the wealth, the honor, the distinction he had given him, and the special favor shown him in the gift of Isaac as the son of his old age—and then said: "Unto him [Isaac] hath he



given all that he hath." All this representation was designed to set forth the excellent advantages Rebekah would be favored with should she become the wife of Isaac. The Holy Spirit's mission is that of seeking a bride for Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Therefore, as the servant of Abraham showed the household of Bethuel the suitableness of Isaac to be the husband of Rebekah, by setting forth the greatness, wealth, and distinction of Abraham, all of which had been conferred upon his son Isaac, so the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ—the things of which the Father hath made Him the Depository and Dispenser—and shows them unto those whom He would win to loving, loyal, and eternal devotion to the only begotten Son of God. "All things that the Father hath are Mine," said Jesus, "therefore said I, He shall take of Mine and shall show it unto you."

The things declared to us and bestowed on us, are originally the Father's things; He is the peculiar Fountain of them all. His love, wisdom, goodness, counsel, will, are their supreme cause and spring. They are made the things of the Son on account of His mediation; for thereby they were to be prepared for us, and given unto us. And then they are actually communicated to us by the Holy Ghost. "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you." He does not communicate them to us immediately from the Father. We do not so receive any grace from Him, nor make any return of praise to Him. We have nothing to do with the Father *immediately*. By the Son alone we have access to Him; and by the Son alone He gives out His grace to us. ("He that hath not the Son hath not the Father.") With Him as the great Treasurer of heavenly things are all grace and mercy intrusted. The Holy Spirit, therefore, bestows them on us, as they are the fruits of the mediation of Christ, and not merely as the effects of the Divine bounty of the Father. Thus He supplies the bodily absence of Jesus Christ, and



effects what He has to accomplish in the world; so that whatever is done by Him, is the same as if it were wrought immediately by Christ in His own person; and thus are His promises accomplished to believers.\*

We should remember, however, in praying for the promised communication and aid of the Comforter, that His work is *to glorify Jesus Christ*; and that, therefore, He is never given to any, save to the end that they, by the enduement, may glorify the Son of God also. Too many "ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, that they may consume it upon their lusts."

#### COMPLETES THE WORK OF REDEMPTION

The Paraclete glorifies Jesus Christ by completing the work of redemption which He began in His own Person and ministry. The mission of the Spirit is not one of original enterprise, but is rather a perfecting work, which presupposes the love, the grace, the counsel, and the eternal purpose of the Father, as manifested in the whole mediation of Jesus Christ the Son. It is peculiarly the work of the Spirit to make all these effectual in them that believe the Gospel, to the praise of the glory of God's free grace. The foundation of the Church is laid in the eternal purpose of the Father, through the mediation of the Son; the rearing and perfecting of the superstructure is to be accomplished, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord. \* \* \* And He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it" (Zech. 4:6, 7).

\*Owen's "The Holy Spirit," pp. 112, 113.



A great spiritual process is now going forward among men which is to culminate in glory ineffable and eternal. This process is identified from first to last with the name and work of Jesus Christ. Through His mediation the Holy Ghost is given. By the Holy Ghost Jesus is to be glorified among men, both in His personality and in His work; till "every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and till every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2: 10, 11).

"The work of the Holy Ghost was to be infinitely more than a work of mere explanation: it was to move forward to the very point of glory, even the glory which the Son of man had with the Father before the world began."\*

Christ, as the great Head of the Church, has already resumed that original glory of which He emptied Himself when He came to redeem the world, and for which His heart yearned with a pathetic home-sickness as He breathed the prayer, "Now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17: 5). And it was "through the eternal Spirit," from first to last, that the human nature of Christ was glorified and made every way meet for its eternal residence at the right hand of God, as a pattern of "the glory that shall be revealed in" all who are the children of God by faith in Him. The same Spirit who made His nature holy in the beginning, made it *eternally glorious* "when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at God's right hand

\*Parker.



in the heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church [which is the body], the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:20-23).

But Jesus will not be glorified in the highest sense, as a Mediator, until His mystical body, the Church, is glorified with Him. Then "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." To the same Spirit who prepared, sanctified, and glorified the human nature of Christ as the Head of the Church, is committed the calling, the sanctification, and the glorification of the Church (the whole number of God's elect) as the body of Christ. As Adam's glory was incomplete in Eden without Eve (since "the woman is the glory of the man"), even so Christ's glory is not complete in heaven without the Church, which is His bride and wife. "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). He is now awaiting the full realization of that end for which He "gave Himself"—the glorification with Himself of His chosen Bride, the Church. Toward that grand culmination in which is involved the highest glorification of Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost is now carrying forward the work of human redemption.

In the onward march of truth, in the progress of



civilization, in the world-wide diffusion of Christian knowledge and experience, in the rapid transformation of heathen into Christian countries, in the constantly advancing moral and spiritual elevation of humanity wherever the light of the Gospel shines, we can discern a progressive movement toward that golden era foretold in prophecy, when the curse shall be lifted from all nations, and "the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8: 21).

The energy by which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is made efficient in the regeneration of human hearts and in the moral renovation of the world, is that which is supplied by the Holy Ghost. The foundation of the Church was laid in the mediation of Jesus Christ. He is "the Stone which the builders rejected," but which God hath "made the headstone of the corner." Prior to offering Himself as a mediatorial sacrifice, He made provision for the propagation of the work He had begun, after He should be withdrawn from among men, by choosing and appointing a human ministry which should continue to the close of the dispensation. As a full and adequate furnishing for their work He promised to His ministers, and to the Church in general, an enduement of "power from on high." "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power," said He, to some whose curiosity prompted them to question Him concerning times and seasons, "but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you [the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, in margin]; and ye



shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

It was the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the infant Church which was to empower her for carrying the Gospel testimony to the ends of the earth, and for winning glorious conquests over the corrupt and corrupting philosophies, mythologies, idolatries, superstitions, and abounding iniquities and vices, with which the whole world was then overspread like Egypt with its plagues. Hence they were all bidden to "tarry in the city of Jerusalem until endued with power from on high."

The Christian Church was founded by the agency of the Holy Ghost; and its permanence, growth, efficiency, and final glorification are conditioned on the abiding ministry of the indwelling Comforter.

This is the hinge on which the whole weight of it turns to this day [says Dr. Owen]. Take this away; suppose it to cease, as to actual accomplishment, and there is an end of the Church of Christ in the world. No dispensation of the Spirit, no Church. He that would utterly separate the Spirit from the Word, might as well burn his Bible. The bare letter of the New Testament will no more produce faith and obedience in the souls of men, than the letter of the Old Testament does among the Jews. (2 Cor. 3: 6-8.) But, blessed be God, who has knit these things together in the bond of an everlasting covenant.

Through all the ages of Christianity the Holy Ghost has been with the Church of God, even "as a wall of fire round about her, and as the glory in the midst." By this she has been preserved amid all the fierce assaults of hell, and by this she has been empowered for glorious triumph in every conflict with



sin and error. By this the Church is furnished for yet more glorious achievements and conquests than have been wrought in any of the bygone ages, and her final and everlasting triumph is assured. In the gift of the abiding Comforter, the risen and ascended Christ has made provision for the full and glorious completion of His redemptive work on earth; and by the unceasing and effectual ministry of the Paraclete the work of actual human redemption is rapidly progressing toward that consummation which involves the supreme glorification of Jesus Christ.



## XXI

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN REGENERATION

#### WHAT IS REGENERATION

Regeneration is a term used to express the communication of spiritual life to souls that were dead in trespasses and sins. The term regeneration (*παλιγγενεσία* from *πάλιν*, again, and *γένεσις*, birth or being born) means "born again." The word itself occurs but twice in the Scriptures—first, in Matt. 19:28: "Ye which have followed Me, in the *regeneration* when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel," where it evidently has reference to "the restitution of all things" under the millennial economy; and second, in Titus 3:5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of *regeneration* and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," etc., where it is equally evident that it designates the moral renovation of individuals through the virtue of Christ's atonement.

While the word itself occurs but twice in the Bible, its equivalent is of common occurrence. Our Savior used the same thought when He said to Nicodemus, "except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). We have also another equivalent in John 1:13—"Which were born,



not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" also in 1 Peter 1:23—"being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever;" and still further in Eph. 2:1—"And you hath He quickened [made alive] who were dead in trespasses and sins."

Regeneration, therefore, is a second birth, whereby one is made partaker of spiritual life who was utterly without it before. The change wrought in this experience is most decided and radical. The Scriptures speak of it not only in the terms mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, but also as being made "a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17); as having "passed from death unto life" (John 5:24); as having been "quickened together with Christ" (Eph. 2:5); as having been "translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. 1:13); as having been made "partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4); and as having "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24).

"Where were you born?" inquired a Church prelate of the holy Summerfield. "In Liverpool and Dublin," was the quick reply. "Why, were you born in two places?" inquired the ecclesiastic; to which Summerfield as promptly replied, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?"

All genuine Christians are "twice-born men"—born of the flesh by natural generation, and as decidedly "born again," "born of the Spirit," "born from above," by a supernatural process of regeneration. We are born into this world possessed of phys-



ical life, and of intellectual life, but destitute of spiritual life, of which Adam and all his posterity were deprived through the fall. Hence, in order to become possessed of spiritual life, we must be spiritually quickened, or reborn, by the energy and power of the Holy Spirit. None can ever enter the spiritual realm called the kingdom of God, or perform any of the functions of spiritual life, until this radical moral change has been effected. By no process of growth, evolution, culture, or reformation, is it possible to enter the spiritual kingdom. Nor can penances, sacraments, ritualistic observances, works of righteousness, gifts of money, or sacrifices of any kind or number, ever avail to procure a standing in the kingdom of God, which is in its inmost nature a spiritual kingdom. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:15).

Having noted some of the scriptural characterizations of this great change, which throw light upon its nature, it is quite in order to note also how the theologians have defined it. Catching the spirit of the biblical texts presented, and of others of like import, they have carefully elaborated from these, doctrinal statements which are of much value. John Wesley defines the new birth as

That change which God works in the soul when He brings it into life; when He raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is a change wrought in the whole soul by the Almighty Spirit of God, when it is created anew in Christ Jesus; when it is renewed after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness.\*



Richard Watson puts it on this wise:

Regeneration is that mighty change in man, wrought by the Holy Spirit, by which the dominion which sin had over him in his natural state, and which he deplores and struggles against in his penitent state, is broken and abolished; so that with the full choice of will and the energy of right affections, he serves God freely, and runs the way of His commandments.\*

Dr. Hannah thus defines it:

Regeneration is that spiritual change which is wrought in believing man by the Holy Spirit of God, and which, though it may be mysterious and inexplicable in its process, is sufficiently plain and obvious in its effects.†

The foregoing are Methodist theologians. We now quote from two Calvinistic authors, to show that there is essential agreement on the subject, however wide the difference on other matters.

The late Rev. Charles A. Hodge, D. D., an eminent Presbyterian theologian, says of regeneration:

It is a Divine creative change analogous to that which God put forth in the beginning, when He said, Let there be light, and there was light; or when Jesus called Lazarus from the grave. It is the communication to us in the center of our soul of a new spiritual life, which, acting from within, communicates a new principle of action which involves the whole soul, with all its faculties in all their functions and in all their relations.‡

The Rev. David Gregg, D. D., Pastor of LaFayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, New York, says:

The term "Regeneration" is a synonym of our political term "Naturalization." It is a compound Latin derivative

\*"Theological Institutes," Vol. II., p. 267.

†Quoted in "Field's Handbook of Christian Theology," p. 217.

‡Lectures on "Theological Themes," p. 341.



which, when literally translated, means to be born again. The man who is born again loses his old nature and receives a new nature, and with the new nature he thinks new thoughts, owes a new allegiance, and seeks new aims. The naturalized citizen of our Republic loses the English, the German, the Italian, the Irish, out of his nature and is filled full of that which is solely and absolutely American. The ideals and methods and principles pertaining to the political life of the fatherland are eliminated from his being, and fired with Americanism pure and simple, he gives his life to the working out of Republican ideals, methods, and principles. If this be not true, in spirit he is still an alien; and he should be treated as an alien and his naturalization papers torn to shreds.\*

These are typical definitions from Protestant theologians of both the Arminian and Calvinistic schools, and show that they are in essential agreement as to the nature of that moral change called regeneration, and that according to both it is a change such as only Divine power can produce. Man must coöperate with God, in the surrender of himself and in the exercise of desire and faith, but beyond this he can do no more: God must change the heart. As Wesley somewhere says, "It takes the power that made the world to make a Christian."

Christ has asserted the absolute necessity for this change in man's nature and character—the fact that God's kingdom is altogether spiritual, while man in his natural state is altogether fleshly, and with his fleshly mind can no more see and enjoy the things of the spiritual realm than a dead man can see and enjoy the things of the natural world. "Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." "Except a man be born of water and of the

\*"Facts That Call for Faith," p. 165.



Spirit [*i. e.*, of the Spirit as symbolized by the water in the "laver" of the ancient temple], he can not enter into the kingdom of God." "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

#### NECESSITY OF REGENERATION

Nicodemus questioned, "How can these things be? Can a man enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" But the words that Jesus had already uttered answer all such inquiries: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." This was equivalent to saying, "I am speaking of a change in man's *moral and spiritual nature*, not of any bodily or fleshly change." To see, enter into, appreciate, and enjoy spiritual things, there must be the creation of a spiritual sense, faculty, instinct, sympathy, such as the natural man does not possess. The Breath of the Eternal must move upon man's dormant spiritual powers, quickening them into life, or he must remain in spiritual darkness and death. Such is the force of Christ's words as to the necessity of the new birth.

The deep and desperate depravity of human nature makes man's regeneration necessary. According to Psalm 51:5 man is "conceived in sin" and "shapen in iniquity." There is a moral twist in his nature from the moment of his conception, inclining him to go astray as soon as consciousness dawns upon him. Nor is he able to overcome this depraved condition by any unaided effort of his own; "because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: so then



they that are in the flesh [in their natural state and under the dominion of their natural propensities] can not please God" (Rom. 8: 7, 8). So desperate is this state of depravity that the natural man can not please God if he would, and he would not please Him if he could. "Every imagination of the thought of his heart is only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Dr. Scofield comments on this passage as follows: "The whole imagination. The Hebrew word signifies not only the imagination but also the purposes and desires." The whole inner life is warped, twisted out of shape, inclined to crookedness, and that hopelessly so. Moreover this condition is one of spiritual blindness. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). He may be cultured, genteel, eloquent, magnetic, and forceful, but in the absence of the Holy Spirit's quickening and illuminating power the spiritual content of Scriptures and the spiritual significance of the things of God's kingdom are absolutely hidden from his understanding. Sin ever blurs or blinds the spiritual vision.

Not only does depravity darken the understanding, but it renders the will perverse and the affections sordid and earthly. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11). What could describe a worse state of perverted will than this? Think of it! The heart *fully set to do evil!* And that because for evil already done vengeance has been delayed by the interposition of Divine mercy! Perversity of will is



again set forth in the words of Jesus to the Jews who rejected Him: "*And ye will not come to Me that ye might have life*" (John 5:40). See also Matt. 23:37. That the affections are also included in this depraved condition is evident from Rom. 8:5: "For they that are after the flesh [that is, they that are in their state of natural depravity] do mind the things of the flesh." Their affections are set on earthly and fleshly things, and they seek after them, rather than after the things of the Spirit of God. Moreover, the whole conduct of those who are unregenerate is under the dominion and regulation of Satan, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation [entire manner of life] in times past, fulfilling the desires [*wills*, in margin] of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:2, 3).

In this sad state we are born—flesh of flesh, the depraved offspring of depraved parents; and having been "born in sin," we must be "born again;" the fleshly principle must die; and, born from above, spirit of Spirit, the spiritual principle will be restored to its proper supremacy and power, thus allying us to God, and enrolling us among the subjects of a spiritual kingdom.\*

The unsullied holiness of God, angels, the spirits of just men made perfect, and all that constitutes the heavenly world with its society, employments and enjoyments, are so many demands upon sinful men that they be born again, if they are ever to rise to that celestial state—to the Father's house with its many mansions, to the glory of the heavenly city, of

\*Field's "Handbook of Christian Theology," p. 218.



which it is said, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).

## THE AUTHOR OF REGENERATION

If it now be asked, "By what agency is this great change in man's nature and character to be wrought?" the answer is, "By the agency of the Holy Spirit of God." By having considered the nature of this change we have seen that the work is one which no man can accomplish for himself; that no process of reformation, education, cultivation, or development, through the example or efforts of others, can bring it to pass; in fact, a work such as no power short of the Infinite can effect. Hence the uniform testimony of Scripture is to the effect that to be spiritual men we must be "*born of the Spirit.*" He alone can impart the new life of Christ. God the Father is its source; God the Son its procuring Cause; and God the Holy Spirit the efficient Agent in its accomplishment.

"Born of the Spirit" is a scriptural phrase embodying the idea that the Spirit is the Agent in the accomplishment of this marvelous change. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth" (maketh alive), is another instance of the same kind; as also St. Paul's statement that "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." See John 6: 63, and 2 Cor. 3: 6. The great apostle also refers to the same thought when he says (Rom. 8: 2), "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of



sin and death." In 2 Cor. 3:18 he also says, speaking of the transformation of personal character, "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed [*metamorphosed*] into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Then again we have the same thought presented in another form in Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing [as in the *laver* of the temple] of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." These are a few of the many Scriptures which teach that the Holy Spirit is always the efficient Agent in the work of regeneration.

But while this point is made clear let no one suppose that man has no part to perform in securing this moral renovation. Man is no mere machine moved upon by the will of another, and having no responsibility in the matter of securing his own salvation. Being a volitional creature he is responsible for his own choices. In the work of saving men God always acts in harmony with the nature and faculties with which He has endowed them. He forces decision upon no man, nor does He save any without their concurrence and coöperation. Hence the scriptural exhortation, "Work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12). Divine sovereignty and human freedom are both concerned in working out man's salvation, incomprehensible as the fact may be. Man must perform his part, or God can not with consistency per-



form His part. There is a sense in which every man must work out his own salvation, as we have just seen; a sense also in which he must make himself a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek. 18:31), if he would experience the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.

It is possible for men to comply with God's requirements, else it were criminal in God to make those requirements. All His commands carry implicit or implied enablings with them. He gives certain power of compliance to all. Not, indeed, independent of Divine help, for we are dependent upon God for even the power to breathe; how much more then for the power to comply with the conditions of salvation from sin! Only that the Holy Spirit awakens, illumines, convicts, and tenderly draws men Godward, none could or would repent, turn to God, and in faith, with prayer and supplication, seek His pardoning mercy. To all these offices the blessed Paraclete is faithful, however, and thereby He ever seeks to bring men into reconciliation with God, and into the experience of regenerating grace. How imperative it is, then, that men act in these important matters while the Spirit awakens, calls, woos, and draws them, lest, being grieved, resisted, vexed, too often and too long, He should cease to perform these functions, and abandon the soul to a hopeless fate! God says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6:3).

#### HE WORKS BY THE USE OF MEANS

In accomplishing the regeneration of men the Spirit of God works by the use of means. It is doubt-



ful that He ever proceeds in any other way, though a certain class of writers have contended earnestly that He does. The truth of God as expressed in His written Word, is an indispensable means employed by the Spirit to bring about the enlightenment, conviction and regeneration of sinful men. Hence the Scriptures speak of them as "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, even *by the Word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:23). Again we read: "Of His own will begat He us *with the Word of His truth*," etc. (James 1:18). Many similar passages will readily occur to those who are familiar with the Scriptures. "Ye shall know the truth, and *the truth* shall make you free" (John 8:32). How important, then, that men "receive with meekness the ingrafted Word, which is able [as used by the Holy Spirit] to save their souls!"

#### WORKS THROUGH OUR FAITH

Instrumentally the Spirit works also through man's faith. Christ performed His miracles upon the bodies of men through their faith; and even so the Spirit performs His mightier miracles upon the souls of men, in the accomplishment of their regeneration, through their faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation, including justification, regeneration, sanctification, and final preservation, is by faith, and by faith *alone*; but it is always by a "faith that worketh." All other faith is dead, and therefore worthless. A living faith is ever a faith that leads to corresponding action, in the direction of cheerful and full compliance with the



conditions of salvation ; and through such a faith the Holy Spirit can and does operate efficiently for the renewal of the heart.

#### CONCOMITANTS OF REGENERATION

The following, from "Field's Handbook of Christian Theology," concisely and clearly sets forth the relation between regeneration and justification, adoption, the witness of the Spirit, etc.:

Although we believe that justification, the witness of the Spirit, and regeneration, are coëxistent (that is, they are bestowed upon us in the same moment of time), is there not, in the order of thinking, a succession of one to the other? and between the two latter is there not a relation resembling that of cause and effect?

The succession in the order of thought is this. In the first instance, justification, or the relative change, is obtained with immediate adoption into the family of God. The Spirit is then given to bear His witness to the heart that sin is forgiven and the prodigal welcomed to the Father's house. And from that witness, and the consciousness of Divine love which it awakens, there springs up in the heart that love to God which is the great principle in our regeneration. (John 4:19.) This is the order of our spiritual recovery, and hence we see the harmony which exists between the blessings, the witness of the Spirit being the keystone—or the link which binds together the relative with the real change.\*

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES ASSURANCE

The Holy Spirit always assures men of the fact when their sins are forgiven and their hearts renewed. "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with

\*pp. 219, 220.



our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). Is it asked, "In what does the witness of the Spirit consist?" No better answer has ever been given than that of Mr. Wesley: "By the testimony of the Spirit, I mean an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God, that Jesus Christ hath loved me and given Himself for me, that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."\*

The witness of our own spirit is a rational conclusion from a careful study of the scriptural marks distinguishing the children of God, and from the assurance of our own consciousness that we bear those marks, that we are indeed the sons of God, and entitled to call Him, Abba, Father. Wesley declares it to be "nearly if not exactly the same as the testimony of a good conscience towards God, and the result of reason and reflection on what we feel in our own souls."†

While there is a joint testimony of God's Spirit with our own spirit, it is of great consequence that we rightly understand the proper order of sequence between the two. A sinner does not ascertain the fact that his sins are forgiven and that he is adopted into the family of God in the first place by any kind of rational process whatever. The pardon of a sinner is an act that passes in the mind of God, and only He can communicate a knowledge of the fact to the one who is pardoned. Hence, from the very nature of the case, the Spirit's testimony must precede all other evidence. The absurdity of placing the

\*Sermon xi. †Ibid.



witness of our own spirit first appears from the fact that one must be inwardly and outwardly holy before he can be conscious of being so; that is, before he can have the testimony of his own spirit that he is inwardly and outwardly holy. But in order to be holy at all he must love God supremely, since supreme love to God is the root of all holiness. We cannot, however, love God until we know that He loves us, not only in the sense of compassion, but with the love of complacency. "We love Him *because* He first loved us" (John 4:19). But we can not know His pardoning love to us until His Spirit seals the assurance of it on our hearts, by a testimony both immediate and direct. Hence it appears that the idea that any testimony or evidence that we are the children of God which is reached only by a rational process is grossly absurd.

The foregoing view is also corroborated by universal Christian experience. "The fruit of the Spirit," which is "love, joy, peace," etc., is an evidence that one in whom it has place is a child of God; but it is a kind of evidence which requires a rational process—reflection, comparison and deduction; and in the nature of the case this fruit can not be manifested until the fact of our pardon is assured. "The relation in which the 'fruits of the Spirit' stand to the 'witness of the Spirit' is that of the effect to its cause."

We should be careful, however, to distinguish clearly between the testimony of the Holy Spirit and impressions that proceed from an excited imagination, or from some delusion of Satan. Failure at this point has led many into errors which have resulted



in their making shipwreck of faith, and also in great damage to the cause of God. How may we make the required distinction? By noting and always giving due weight to the following principles:

1. The witness of the Spirit is always preceded by genuine repentance. Repentance (*μετάνοια*, in the Greek) means literally having *a new mind*. It is a change of mind, followed by a consequent change of life; a change of purpose, followed by a corresponding change of conduct. To repent is to "cease to do evil, and learn to do well." It is to renounce sin with all one's strength of purpose, and as hateful in the sight of God, and to "turn with purpose of heart to the Lord." Isaiah exhorted men to repentance in his day on this wise: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Chap. 55:7). When a soul is so humbled with a sense of his own sinfulness that he cries, like the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," he may be said truly to repent; and until one has experienced substantially this change of mind, and its consequent change of life, he has not repented in the scriptural sense. There is no such thing as repentance without amendment of life; nor is there forgiveness of sins for any but those who have genuinely repented. Therefore let every man be assured that, unless he is honestly responsive to this test, any supposed witness of the Spirit he may have is either a mere matter of false imagination, or a delusion of the devil. Some deceptive voice has cried, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."



2. The witness of the Spirit is always followed by "the fruit of the Spirit." The Holy Spirit in the heart is a tree of life, and its presence in any individual is always attested by the production of holy fruit. This fruit is composed of a cluster of spiritual graces such as superficial and false professors can never simulate. Those graces are "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5: 22, 23). Wherever the inward testimony of the Spirit is really experienced these fruits appear in the outward life; and, *vice versa*, wherever these fruits really appear in the outward life, they are the products of the witnessing Spirit. Such graces are not the product of a heated imagination, nor of satanic delusion. Nor are they indigenous to the natural heart, but are ever the products of a regenerative change. Where these abound, the witness from above and the witness of the fruit substantiate each other, and bear united testimony, resulting in "strong consolation," which even the approach of death and the judgment will not disturb.

3. The witness of the Spirit, which is primarily bestowed for the consolation of the individual believer, is always attended by certain other scriptural evidences of a regenerate state. We mention a few of them: (1) *Victory over the world*. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). The faith by which one is raised from the death of sin to a life of righteousness also continues to raise him above the world in its baseness and deadness, and to give him victory over its spirit, maxims, customs, fashions, with all its



pride and pomp and show. Regenerated in the past we are renewed in the present, made triumphant, and even "more than conquerors," over all the elements of worldliness about us. (2) *Victory over sin.* "He that is born of God doth not commit sin: for His seed remaineth in him; and he can not sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9). "The real significance of John's expression, 'he that is born of God,' is not perceived unless we know that the tense of the word 'born' (γεννημένος) is the perfect, in the Greek, indicating a past birth, but lasting on in its effects."\*

He that has been born of God, and in whom that birth is still effective, can not be sinning longer as he was wont to do before. He has quit the trade; gone out of the business; lost all inclination toward it; and is filled with horror of it. Hence "*he can not sin.*" Not that it is a physical or an intellectual impossibility, but a moral impossibility so long as his new birth continues to be effective. Whenever temptation presents itself and solicits him toward wrongdoing, he recoils from the suggestion, as one would recoil from the subtle approach of a venomous serpent; and his language is, like that of Joseph in the presence of the cunning temptress, "How can I do this great evil, and sin against God?" (3) *Love of the brethren.* "By this we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:7, 8). The Greek word "love" here is not ἔρως, mere physical or

\*Bishop Alexander in "Expositor's Bible."



sensual affinity; nor yet *φιλία*, by which the Greeks expressed mere friendship; but the word *ἀγάπη*, which means Divine love—a love to which the ancient pagan world was a total stranger, “the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us,” and which is the essential principle in regeneration. There is no surer external evidence of the new birth than ardent love for saints, than genuine fellowship for holy people. “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.” This must be no mere natural affection, however; no mere denominational affinity; no mutual attraction based on natural congeniality; no delight in others because they are of our own race or nation. It is a love infinitely transcending all selfish considerations; “that overleaps the barriers of sect and party, of Church and nation, and fixes its regard on every one that loves God and bears His image,” esteeming him as a brother in Christ, however poor, illiterate, uncomely, and low in the social scale he may be, or whatever his race, nationality, color, or hereditary defects. (4) *Righteousness of life*. “If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him” (1 John 2:29). Every regenerate heart has received, by virtue of its new birth, a Christlike passion for righteousness which is stronger than death. Truth, justice, righteousness, goodness, purity—these are things dearer to such a man than his own life. He knows full well that to deviate willingly in the least degree from any of these principles is to dishonor God and belie his own profession. It is *in his heart* at all times “to fulfil all righteousness.” He delights



to render to all their dues—to “render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” His righteousness is no mythical affair—the righteousness of Christ *imputed*, in the Antinomian sense of excusing base unrighteousness in himself—but it is the righteousness of Christ *imparted*, and that to the end that he may love righteousness and hate iniquity, and that universal righteousness may be his rule of action in all things. It is his meat and drink to do the will of his Father in heaven, and to prove the genuineness of his discipleship to Christ by practising righteousness in all his relations to his fellow men. “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous” (1 John 3:7).

#### REGENERATION IS PARTIAL SANCTIFICATION

Regeneration is incipient but incomplete sanctification. It is sanctification begun, in that it is the impartation of the germ or principle of holiness to him who receives it. Bishop Randolph S. Foster says, “All the principles of holiness are begotten in the heart at the instant of regeneration; entire sanctification adds not a single new grace.”\* Moreover, these principles predominate in the life from the moment of conversion, to the extent that, as Wesley says, “Even babes in Christ are so far saved as not to commit sin.” Hence all New Testament believers, however immature they may be in Christian experience, are designated as “holy brethren.” The Spirit by whom they have been regenerated is a *Holy*

\*“Christian Purity.”



Spirit; and their regeneration by the impartation of holy principles is the first stage in the great work whereby He is to perfect them in holy character, and render them meet for the holy society of heaven.

They make a serious mistake, however, who contend, as did Count Zinzendorf, that sanctification is completed at the time of regeneration. *Potentially* "Christ is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," even from the moment when first we savingly believe on Him. But it is just as absurd to hold that we then have either entire sanctification or complete redemption, as it would be to contend that because in the new born babe we have *potentially* the adult man or woman, therefore we have *actually* the adult man or woman. The potential sanctification included in regeneration must be wrought into actual and conscious experience in the heart and life before sanctification is complete and adult spiritual manhood reached. The Scriptures recognize the imperfect state of those who are newly born of God, as also of those who have failed to advance in spirituality since their regeneration, as they should have done.



## XXII

### THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SANCTIFICATION

The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of holiness," the Sanctifier of God's people. It is His province to sanctify the Church, that it may be presented "as a chaste virgin unto Christ" at His coming, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

The Church can be made holy, however, only through the sanctification of the individual members composing it. Hence, in order that He may be the Sanctifier of the Church, the Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier of individual believers in Christ. Every true believer on the Son of God is "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:2).

Holiness is indeed "the central idea of Christianity." It is the golden thread which runs through the whole Bible, binding all its separate parts into one harmonious and glorious whole. Dr. (later Bishop) Randolph S. Foster, in his admirable book on "Christian Purity," aptly says: "It breathes in the prophecy, thunders in the law, murmurs in the narrative, whispers in the promises, supplicates in the prayers, sparkles in the poetry, resounds in the songs, speaks in the types, glows in the imagery, voices in the



language, and burns in the spirit of the whole scheme [of redemption], from its alpha to its omega, from its beginning to its end. Holiness needed. Holiness required. Holiness offered. Holiness attainable. Holiness a present duty, a present privilege, a present enjoyment, is the process and completeness of its wondrous theme. It is the truth glowing all over, webbing all through revelation; the glorious truth which sparkles, and whispers, and sings, and shouts in all its history and biography, and poetry and prophecy, and precepts, and promises and prayers; the great central truth of the system. The wonder is that all do not see, that any rise up to question a truth so conspicuous, so glorious, so full of comfort."

The Bible is a holy Book. It is the Word of an infinitely holy God, revealing to man the true nature of holiness, its absolute necessity, its transcendent and eternal benefits, the Divine provision made for its attainment by the children of men, the way into this gracious experience, the excellent fruits by which the experience is evidenced, the glorious destiny to which it leads, and the irreparable doom of neglecting such a great salvation. It presents the incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ as having been comprehended in the Divine method of providing complete redemption for sinful men, and the Holy Spirit as having been given in His pentecostal effusion as a result of Christ's finished work, and as the omnipresent and omnipotent Agent in the application of redemption to believers for their uttermost salvation. It is the Spirit's work to quicken from the death of sin; to regenerate man's moral and



spiritual nature; to assure him of the forgiveness of sins, and of his acceptance with God through Christ; to be his Teacher, Guide, Strengthenener, Comforter, and the Perfecter of his life in Christ.

#### SANCTIFICATION BEGUN IN REGENERATION

The Holy Spirit's work of sanctification is begun and in a goodly degree accomplished in regeneration. In this experience a new life is begotten in the soul, a life of holy love, which thenceforth takes the ascendancy over all the carnal tendencies of human nature, bringing them into habitual subjugation to the law of Christ; so that, as Wesley says, "Even babes in Christ are so far saved as not to commit sin." "He that is born of God doth not commit sin," St. John says: "for His seed remaineth in him, and he can not sin because he is born of God." Every one who becomes an experimental Christian ceases to practise sin, and begins to practise holiness, as the rule of his life. Holy principles are begotten in his heart, and thenceforth have the mastery in his life. Hence it is that all Christians are designated in Scripture as "holy brethren." They are so far sanctified, by virtue of their conversion, that the power of sin over them is broken, and the power of a new and holy life in Christ is set up in its stead. Holiness is the predominating character of every person justly entitled to be regarded as a Christian. We can not insist too strongly on the fact that sanctification has its beginning in the work of regeneration.

But while the Holy Spirit begins the work of sanctification by the regeneration of the heart and life,



it does not follow, nor is it true, that the work of sanctification is completed at the time of regeneration. The power of sin is broken, but its presence, in the form of sinful principles and propensities, is still within, and is a constant source of danger. It is like inflammable material in the basement of one's house, where it is likely at any moment to come in contact with fire and result in explosion, or conflagration, or both. It is a foe which lurks within the citadel awaiting the opportunity to betray it to its final overthrow, and which, when detected and resisted, struggles mightily for the mastery. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye can not do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). Both the Scriptures and the common experience of Christians, the world over, alike declare the falsity of Count Zinzendorf's teaching, that sanctification is complete at the time of regeneration; or, that "all true believers are not only saved from the *dominion* of sin, but from the *being* of inward as well as outward sin, so that it no longer *remains* in them."\*

## ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION DEFINED

But what is complete sanctification? and wherein does it differ from the experience of regeneration? Entire sanctification is deliverance from all inward sin—from evil thoughts and evil tempers. It is a state in which no wrong tempers, dispositions, or affections remain in the soul; but in which all the

\*Quoted from Wesley.



thoughts, words, and actions are governed by pure love. Regeneration is a work of grace within the heart which effects a change of our moral state and character, emancipating us from the dominion and love of sin, planting the principle of obedience in the heart, and restoring the soul to the image of God. As to the difference between this experience and that of entire sanctification, the late Rev. William McDonald has well expressed it as follows:

1. In regeneration, sin does not *reign*; in sanctification, it does not *exist*.

2. In regeneration, sin is *suspended*; in sanctification, it is *destroyed*.

3. In regeneration, irregular desires—anger, pride, unbelief, envy, etc.—are *subdued*; in sanctification, they are *removed*.

4. Regeneration is salvation from the voluntary *commission of sin*; sanctification is salvation from the *being of sin*.

5. Regeneration is the old man *bound*; sanctification is the old man *cast out* and *spoiled of his goods*.

6. Regeneration is sanctification begun; entire sanctification is the work completed.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS BELIEVERS OF THE NEED OF HOLINESS

The Spirit of God enlightens believers as to their *need* of being sanctified as a means of leading them into the experience. He convicts them of inbred sin, makes them feel and loathe the plague within, and leads them to humble themselves and cry mightily to God for deliverance. Conviction for sanctification is not conviction of guilt for wrong done or for duty neglected. It is not in any sense a conviction of having backslidden from God. On the other hand it



presupposes present consciousness of walking in the light, and enjoying full justification from all past offenses and failures, through faith in the atoning merits of Jesus Christ. But the conviction of which we speak is a painful consciousness that, while we are fully justified from all past transgressions and derelictions, there is a *principle* of sin *within* us, which clings to our very thoughts, tempers, and desires, evermore seeking the ascendancy in outward conduct, defiling the inward man in every part, and from which we should and must be *cleansed* before we can fully glorify God and enjoy uninterrupted communion with Him.

This conviction is accomplished by the Spirit in two ways: first, by those inward operations through which He sheds light upon the soul, and reveals to it its own corruptions, still remaining since the work of regeneration has been effected; and secondly, by so illuminating the Scriptures to the understanding as to make these reveal to him the necessity and privilege of being made altogether holy. Sometimes the disclosures thus made of inbred sin are well-nigh overwhelming, and cause the soul to doubt for the time being whether it can be possible that he has ever been truly converted. "How can one be a true child of God," he asks himself, "in whom there is so much moral impurity and such a painful sense of unlikeness to the moral character of God?" To be led from the raptures of a sense of reconciliation with God into such a humiliating and painful consciousness of inward unfitness for His holy presence, is, for the time being, a melancholy experience; but by this experience the Holy Spirit is seeking to lead the soul,



not to disparage the work already accomplished in its regeneration, but to aspire for and definitely seek after that "higher life" in Christ, that full conformity to the character and will of God, which is attainable through faith in the blood of Jesus.

#### REVEALS THE POSSIBILITY

The Holy Spirit not only shows the believer the need of this higher work, but in doing so He likewise reveals the assured possibility of receiving it. He so illuminates the commands, precepts, prayers, promises and provisions of the Scriptures bearing upon this very point that the conviction of its glorious possibility becomes not only assured, but a mighty incentive to seek it at every cost, and a mighty uplift and inspiration to the faith which is necessary to its attainment. Thus assured, uplifted and inspired with a vision of the glorious possibility, the soul advances to the realization of the desired object saying,

"The thing surpasses all my thought,  
But faithful is the Lord;  
Through unbelief I stagger not,  
For God has spoke the word.

"Faith, mighty faith the promise sees,  
And looks to that alone;  
Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries, 'It shall be done!'

"Obedient faith that waits on Thee,  
Thou never wilt reprove;  
But Thou wilt form Thy Son in me,  
And perfect me in love."

Blessed be God! the Comforter who convinces of the *necessity* of this work points us also to the *possibility* of its en-



joyment. Our blessed Savior in His intercessory prayer says, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). So the Holy Spirit who inspired the Word brings to mind the promises and assurances, and reveals the rich provisions of infinite love. Does the child of God groan over his impurities and corruptions? He is pointed to the fountain over which is written, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Does he sigh over his want of conformity to God? He is assured that, beholding with open face as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he shall be changed [*μεταμορφούμεθα*, metamorphosed] into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:18.) Does he doubt whether this is his great privilege? Again the Spirit speaks in His Word, "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." He is thus led to see that, such is the amplitude of the provision, such is the all-cleansing power of the blood of Christ, such is the almightiness of the Eternal Spirit, that no matter what he may be, the work can be done; and whenever, at any stage of the believer's experience, his faith lays hold of these great promises and provisions, the work will be done. According to his faith will it be done unto him.\*

#### LEADS TOWARD PERFECTION BY PROMOTING GROWTH IN GRACE

The Holy Spirit also leads the believer on toward perfection or entire sanctification through promoting his growth in grace. There is a growth in grace before one is sanctified, and a more rapid and healthful growth in grace after sanctification is experienced. All growth in grace preceding the experience of sanctification is a gradual approach to the point where sanctification will be complete. "Are we to understand, then, that entire sanctification is finally reached by a gradual process," some one may inquire.

\*Dunn's "Mission of the Spirit," pp. 184, 185.



No. That is not the idea. To use Mr. Wesley's figure, death is reached through a process of dying, which may be longer or shorter in its continuance; but the man is never dead until the *process* has ended, and a *crisis* has occurred. So that we may say of death it is both a process and a crisis. However long the process may be continued, the crisis must be reached wherein death is complete. That crisis in case of a man dying must of necessity be instantaneous. Just so with a soul seeking holiness. Under the quickening, illuminating, prompting, and guidance of the Holy Spirit, he is led more and more to "mortify the deeds of the flesh," or continually to die to sin, which is a process comparable to the gradual approach of physical death. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13). But as sure as the gradual process of dying physically leads to an instantaneous crisis in which physical death is complete, just so surely will constant growth in grace and the corresponding process of dying to sin bring one at last to that spiritual crisis where he is "dead indeed unto sin" in the deepest meaning of the term, "and alive unto God through Jesus Christ." Moreover, the crisis will be instantaneous in this case, as well as in the former one.

In the mean time, however, it is the work of the Holy Spirit to lead the soul more and more to that self-judgment of his own inbred sin, and to that outward purification of himself in the new light shed upon him, which will bring him nearer to God and into deeper fellowship with Him, and which will beget within him deeper loathing of his own impurity



and intenser hungering and thirsting after "all the fulness of God." Without this he can not attain unto that deep and abiding rest of soul which he sees to be his privilege in Christ. This is one of the ways in which the Spirit promotes growth in grace on the part of believers. Then, too, He broadens, deepens, and clarifies the vision of the soul regarding the Scriptures and the things of the kingdom of God. He also brings before it the numberless incentives to utter self-abandonment, and to following on to know the Lord in the fulness of His saving power, as well as revealing to him in ever deeper measure the disastrous consequence of allowing the light that is in him to become darkness; and thereby He both lures and spurs the soul on in exercising itself unto godliness, and seeking to be perfect, even as its Father in heaven is perfect. "As many as are [thus] led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). While led by the Spirit, they continually fulfil the precept, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ;" and this growth involves increasing sanctification, and brings them constantly toward the point where the crisis will be reached in which their sanctification will be complete. There is a sense in which such souls can truly say, "I die daily."

#### LEADS TO FINAL AND PERMANENT SELF-CONSECRATION

The Spirit of God likewise leads the believer to that final and permanent act of self-consecration to God which his increased light upon the character and claims of the Almighty shows him is required as a



prerequisite to being sanctified wholly. In order to sanctify us wholly God must have us wholly. In other words, we must yield ourselves to Him in utter self-abandonment, passive in His hands as clay in the hands of the potter, before it is at all possible for Him to consummate the work within us. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies [including your entire manhood] a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service; and be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12: 1, 2). The Spirit of God alone can enable us to present such a sacrifice to God; but when once it is made, through the power of the Spirit, we shall quickly prove the will of God to be in all things "good, and acceptable, and perfect." Such a consecration is a condition of knowing the will of God, and also of being brought into full and perfect harmony therewith. Consecration, in the sense of separation and dedication unto God, is our part of sanctification; but it is very far from being the whole of the experience. Hence those who are taught to consecrate themselves to God, and then to rest in that act of consecration, on the supposition that they have put themselves upon the altar, and that "the altar sanctifieth the gift" (which is not true in this sense, although it is in another sense), are being misled, and are apt to rest in their own doing instead of resting alone on the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Our own consecration no more saves us than any other work in which we might trust. But when full and



complete it brings us to where, and to the only point where, it is at all possible to exercise that appropriating faith in Jesus which will bring the realization that His part of the work is done as well as ours, and that we are now cleansed from all sin, or wholly sanctified.

#### AUTHOR OF THE FAITH WHICH SANCTIFIES

But *faith* is the final and absolute condition of our sanctification; and the Spirit of God develops in fully surrendered hearts that faith which lays hold upon the promises, appropriates them, and realizes their fulfilment. "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth." "He shall glorify Me," the Master said; "for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." "He shall teach you all things." "He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." By this work of teaching, guiding, quickening the memory regarding Christ's words, and revealing the things of Christ, the Spirit gives us strong ground for our faith to stand upon; sets the object of faith before us in the most transparent light; and enables us to grasp and hold that object unwaveringly in the face of whatever would occasion our staggering or failure. The Holy Spirit stimulates, strengthens, steadies us in our attitude of faith in God, through Jesus Christ, as we yield ourselves to Him in *willing* and *trustful* surrender. Thus our faith grows strong, and we are finally enabled to say:

"Bold I approach the eternal throne,  
And claim the crown through Christ my own."



The last thing we can do to bring a realization of the blessing as in actual possession is to *close in with God by faith*. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The heavens and the earth may fail, but this Word of Jehovah can never fail. It is true yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. There may have been failure on our part, but it is impossible on God's part. Nor can the prayer prompted by the Holy Spirit and offered in true faith ever be in vain, whatever suggestions to the contrary may assail us.

"Unanswered yet? Faith *can not* be unanswered;  
 Her feet are firmly planted on the Rock;  
 Amid the wildest storms she stands undaunted,  
 Nor quails before the loudest thunder-shock.  
 She knows Omnipotence has heard her prayer,  
 And cries, 'It shall be done, sometime, somewhere.'"

But our faith must get beyond saying "It shall be done, *sometime, somewhere,*" and must be emboldened to claim the blessing *now*, before the experience can be realized.

"But what is the faith by which we are sanctified," it may be asked. No better answer can be given to this question than that which Mr. Wesley has furnished. Speaking of "the faith by which we are sanctified, saved from sin, and perfected in love," he says:

This faith is a Divine evidence or conviction

1. That God hath *promised* this sanctification in the Holy Scriptures.
2. It is a Divine evidence or conviction that what God hath promised He is *able* to perform.
3. It is a Divine evidence or conviction that He is *able* and *willing* to do it *now*.
4. To this confidence that God is *able* and *willing* to do it



*now*, there needs to be one thing more—a Divine evidence or conviction that He *doth* it.

## THE AUTHOR OF ASSURANCE

Such a faith will inevitably result in assurance. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." It will bring a blessed consciousness of the incoming and infilling of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Comforter, the Almighty Sanctifier; and He is the witness to His own accomplished work. "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:9-12). The various experiences of Divine grace are among the things which are freely given to us of God, and therefore are among the things which we *know* by the revealing of the Holy Spirit. One may know when he is sanctified as certainly and as satisfactorily as when he is justified. Every seeker of this grace should claim it by faith, and hold steadfast in this faith, until his faith is sealed with assurance that the Comforter has come and has finished His gracious work. Then he can sing exultingly, from a deep consciousness that his heart is made pure,



"'Tis done! Thou dost this moment save,  
With full salvation bless;  
Redemption through Thy blood I have,  
And spotless love and peace."

#### SOME THINGS SANCTIFICATION WILL NOT DO

But there are some things that the experience of entire sanctification will not do for those who receive it. First, it will not render them perfect in the sense of being infallible. The fully sanctified do not attain unto absolute perfection, which belongs to God alone; nor to the perfection of angels, who were created pure, spiritual beings, and have a perfection of sinlessness and intelligence which we can not attain unto while in the flesh; nor to the perfection of the unfallen Adam in his Paradisiacal estate; nor to any state of human perfection such as exempts from errors in judgment and consequent errors in practice, from numberless infirmities of mind and body, from subtle and powerful assaults of temptation, or from fallibility of any kind and the possibility of backsliding. Satan will contend every inch of the ground from the place where one is sanctified until he is safely within the gates of the celestial city. It will be our only safety to "watch, and fight, and pray," mustering all the faith and courage we can command at all times. The character of the assaults upon the faith and love and patience of the sanctified may be changed, but they will never be very long without something of the kind occasioning the necessity for vigilance, wisdom, courage, and strength.

Second, the experience of holiness will not super-



sede the possibility and necessity of growth in grace. Some have urged as an objection to this doctrine that if one were fully sanctified he could no longer grow in grace. How absurd! As well might one caution a lady against getting all the weeds out of her flower bed, because if she gets all the weeds out the flowers can grow no more. She would suspect such a man of having escaped from a lunatic asylum; and, unless she regarded him as dangerous, would proceed with her work in the calm assurance that the more free she could make the flower bed from weeds the more rapidly and healthily the flowers would grow. "After a soul is cleansed from all sin, it is then fully prepared to grow in grace." Moreover, it is not only possible to grow in grace after one has been sanctified, but it is absolutely necessary, in order to maintain the ground already occupied, and retain the experience already received. The rule in the kingdom of Christ is, "To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." This was spoken by our Lord regarding the matter of improving or failing to improve upon the talents entrusted to the servants during their lord's absence. Is it not equally pertinent here? The lesson should be laid diligently to heart by all.

Third, the experience of entire sanctification in no sense excludes the need of a Mediator on the part of those who receive it. It has been ignorantly objected to the doctrine that, if it be true that men may be sanctified wholly in the present life, such an experience would place them beyond further need of the mediation of Christ. Such an objection is wholly



without foundation. Entire sanctification is derived only through the mediation of Christ, and the experience is continuously dependent upon faith in that mediation. All spiritual blessings are perpetually conditioned upon our relation to Christ as Mediator, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). Even the redeemed before the throne of God stand there only through the mediation of the Son of God. (Rev. 7:15.)

"I ask them whence their vict'ry came;  
They, with united breath,  
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,  
Their triumph to His death."

The holiest souls are the most deeply conscious of their need of the atonement. The holy life is ever a "life of faith on the Son of God." All the fruits of Christian holiness are conditioned upon our abiding in Christ, the living Vine. The sanctified believer rejoices in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:3); walks in Christ Jesus (Col. 2:6); glories in His Cross (Gal. 6:14); does all things in His name (Col. 3:17); constantly looks and longs for His appearing to claim the kingdom for Himself and for His Bride. (Tit. 2:13; Rev. 22:20.) His is the life that is "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3); "and never does he so fully comprehend the preciousness of Jesus as when he has put away the evil and bitter thing which Christ hateth."

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT PRODUCES HOLY FRUIT

The Holy Spirit invariably produces the *fruit* of holiness in all who are truly sanctified. Vain, and



positively damaging and wicked, is all profession of holiness that is unaccompanied by corresponding fruit. "Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt." Nothing is surer than that the tree is known by its fruit. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22). "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22, 23). The one fruit of holy character which comprehends all others is LOVE. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; because perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:16-18).

To love God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is to manifest the fruit of sanctification or holiness. This is the sum total of Christian perfection.



## XXIII

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

#### WHAT IS THE CHURCH

In its New Testament sense the word church (*ἐκκλησία*) never has reference, as is frequently the case with us, to either the building in which Christians assemble for worship, or to any particular sect or denomination professing to be followers of Christ. Rather "it means an unorganized body, whose unity does not depend on its being met together in one place; not an assemblage of atoms, but members in their several places united to the One Head, Christ, and forming one organic living whole. (1 Cor. 12.) The bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25-32; 1:22), the body of which He is the Head. The household of Christ and of God. (Matt. 10:25; Eph. 2:19.) The temple of the Holy Ghost, made up of living stones. (Eph. 2:22; 1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Pet. 2:5.)"\*

Occasionally the term is used to represent one or more particular Christian associations, and may be composed of members few enough to worship together in a private house (Rom. 16:5); but it is a term generally used to designate the whole body of Christian believers in every age and place—"the general Assembly and Church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven."

\*Canon Faussett, "Bible Cyclopedia," Art. "Church."



As a New Testament institution the Church had its origin in the memorable "upper room" at Jerusalem, at the first Pentecost following the resurrection and ascension of Christ. He had promised to send the Comforter; had assured the disciples that they should be "baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence;" that they should "receive power after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them;" and had bidden them "tarry in the city of Jerusalem until" the promised enduement should be received, after which they were to be His witnesses "to the uttermost part of the earth." What expectations the Master's words must have raised within them! What hopes and longings must they have begotten! With what intense anxiety would these humble followers of Jesus await the fulfilment of His words!

Accordingly, after witnessing the ascension of the Master, the eleven disciples returned to Jerusalem, and went into "an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren" (Acts 1:13, 14).

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4.)



## BIRTHDAY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Such was the birthday of the Christian Church—such were the circumstances under which Christianity took on organic form; received as its credential to all the world and to the end of time the promised Chrism from above; entered upon its mission of evangelizing the nations; and began to exercise those varied spiritual “gifts” for the bestowment of which Jesus Christ had ascended to the Father. The Christian Church was born of the Holy Ghost; born from above; born to a spiritual and eternal life through Christ; and born to a destiny in which its individual members shall finally “all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13); to a destiny of joint-heirship with Him to all that glory which He received from the Father (Rom. 8:17; John 17:22), and of eternal partnership with Him as “the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Rev. 21:9). The “New Creation,” like the creation of old, was due to the brooding of the Spirit of God upon the elements of chaos, like a dove upon her eggs, communicating vital warmth, and bringing forth abundant life.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

The Holy Spirit, therefore, is the very life of the Church as a spiritual society. He is “the Spirit of life,” and where He is not energetically present, spiritual life is utterly impossible. Exclude the Holy Spirit from a so-called Christian assembly, and,



though it may remain strictly orthodox, absolutely loyal to its early traditions, and may retain the punctual observance of New Testament forms of worship, spiritually it will be as dead as an Egyptian mummy. Every accession to such an organization only increases the bulk of the carcass. It may take to itself much of earthly pomp and glory, and seek thereby to appeal to the physical senses of men and women, but this will in no wise relieve the situation. It is a case of *death*; and the more you paint and decorate a corpse the more ridiculous you will make both yourself and it appear. The only hope for such a church is that some modern Ezekiel will come along, who will have the courage to preach the Word of the Lord to the dry bones until there is a noise and a shaking, and until the bones come together, bone to his bone, and sinews come upon them, and flesh covers them; and then, at the command of Jehovah, to "prophesy unto the wind," and say, "Come from the four winds, O Breath [Spirit], and breathe upon these slain that they may live," until "the Breath enters into them," and "they live and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (Ezek. 37:1-10).

#### CHRIST'S AGENT IN HEADSHIP OF THE CHURCH

The Holy Spirit is the omnipresent Agent by whom Jesus Christ exercises His Headship over the Church. God "gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22, 23). As Head of the Church Jesus Christ must direct all its movements, and be the chief Supervisor of all its affairs. But He



has withdrawn His bodily presence from the Church in its earthly state, and has sent the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, an invisible and universal Presence, in its stead, to administer the affairs of that Headship. Hence, as Dougan Clark, M. D., has admirably expressed himself on this topic,

Both the service and the worship of God's people—the former typified in the Mosaic ritual by the work of the Levites; the latter, by that of the priests—are to be under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Upon the individual believers He bestows a variety of gifts, to be exercised for the good of the body. And He Himself presides, invisibly but really, over every assembly of true worshipers.\*

The true worshipers are such as “worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him” (John 4:23). The Holy Spirit Himself, as the Spirit of Christ, presides over all such assemblies as thus worship the Father. It is by the Holy Spirit that Jesus meets with every assembly, however few their number, that are gathered in His name. The Spirit of God is the Inspirer of all true worship. He indites the prayers of saints. He inspires their praises. He kindles the flame of devotion within their hearts, and enables them to “offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:5). But if He is to direct in the worship of Christian assemblies, He must be honored by being sought unto for such direction, as also by being allowed unrestrained operation among the people. Independent as the wind, which is His symbol, He will no more submit to any prescribed formula in His operation and manifestation,

\*“Offices of the Holy Spirit,” p. 215.



than the wind will be directed or restrained by human dictum.

Christ fulfilled, superseded, and forever abolished the typical priesthood of the Old Dispensation when He offered up Himself, the "one sacrifice for sins for ever," "entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," "and sat down on the right hand of God." But He abolished the Old that He might introduce the New; He put an end to the carnal that He might make way for the spiritual; He caused the temporal to pass away, that it might be superseded by the eternal. Now He Himself has become the eternal King-Priest of His people; and in Him true believers have become "a kingdom of priests," "a spiritual priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

As a "kingdom of priests" all believers, by virtue of their union with Christ, the eternal King-Priest who is their ever-living Head through the Spirit, are invested with both regal and priestly dignities. Hence, inasmuch as they all are priests, it follows that each can perform his own acts of worship, with no human mediator to come between him and the Object of his worship. He not only may, but *must*, do this, if he would offer acceptable worship to the Most High God. "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him, *MUST* worship Him in Spirit and in truth." Only they who rise to the dignity of the true, spiritual priesthood can render Him such worship.

Pompous display and impressive ritual are not only unnecessary to such worship, whether private or public, but are almost sure to prove a hindrance. They minister to the sensuousness of men and women,



rather than to pure spiritual devotion. The first essential of true worship is that it be spiritual; that the worshiper "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ." Whatever, aside from Christ the Mediator, is allowed to come between the soul and God will eclipse the vision of Him who is the Object of our worship, and will necessarily hinder the spontaneous flow of spiritual devotion. True worship being spiritual, it may be acceptably performed wherever the sincere heart is uplifted to God in adoring reverence and love. It may be accompanied by simple outward forms of devotion, but these are not *essential* to such worship. It may be with or without such forms; it may be audible or in silence; it may be characterized by

"That speechless awe that dares not move,"

or it may be accompanied with "a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind," as on the day of Pentecost. The one thing essential is that it be spiritual worship—worship prompted by the Holy Spirit of God. Hence those who contend for worshiping God in silence only, and they who contend for noisy demonstrations in worship; those who over-magnify external rites and forms, and they who set all forms at naught, contending for silent and formless devotion as the only rule; those who put excessive stress on individualism in worship, and they who would so merge the individual in the mass as to rob worship of all individuality, and make all worshipers just alike; these all do violence to psychological law, to the Christian Scriptures, and to the very nature of Christian worship.



## THE BESTOWER OF DIVERSIFIED GIFTS

Christ exercises His Headship over the service of His people through the Holy Spirit in the bestowment of the various "gifts" needful for the edification of the body as a whole. As chapters are elsewhere devoted to the "Gifts of the Spirit," little need be said on that subject here. It should be noted by all, however, that there is a wide difference between the "*gift* of the Holy Spirit" and the "*gifts* of the Spirit." The former is the communication of the Holy Spirit Himself to the believer as the indwelling Comforter and Sanctifier; while the latter are special enduements of faith, wisdom, knowledge, power, discernment, healing, miracle-working, etc.; or, in other cases, special adaptations to varied ministries and functions for the edification of the body of Christ. The former is the blood-bought heritage and birth-right of every believer; the latter are for the Church as a whole, but are distributed among its members by the Holy Spirit, who distributes them "to every man severally as He will" (1 Cor. 12:11).

Much confusion has at times been wrought by failing to recognize that these special or extraordinary "gifts" are for the Church as a whole, but that *no one of them is for every member of the Church*. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (1 Cor. 12:4-7). The gift of the Holy Spirit is for all believers, and on conditions that may be equally met by all; but the "gifts" of the Spirit are conditioned



upon the Sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in their communication and distribution. "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith [not the *grace* of faith, but faith of an extraordinary character as a *gift* or *endowment*] by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will" (1 Cor. 12:4-11).

#### THE SPIRIT APPOINTS TO VARIOUS MINISTRIES

In exercising His Headship over the Church through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ calls or appoints men and women to various ministries, all tending to the edification of the body as a whole. "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13). Quite similar to this are Paul's words in 1 Cor. 12:28: "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

God has made room for the employment of various



classes of ministers in His Church, to each of which is given his own particular field of operations, but all of which are to be "laborers together with God" for the general edification of the body of which they form a part. The nearer any branch of the Church comes to recognizing this order in the practical working of its system, the more will the Holy Spirit be honored, and the more abundantly will He make the manifestation of His presence a contributing factor in its success. But further remarks on this topic will be reserved for the chapter on "The Holy Spirit and the Christian Ministry."

## SECURES AGAINST FALSE DOCTRINE

The Holy Spirit properly recognized and honored is the best security of the Church against false doctrine. There always have been teachers of heresy, and there always will be such until the Lord Himself shall come. The Church is bidden to "try the spirits, whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Moreover, this is the test by which every teacher and every teaching is to be tried: "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:1-3).

Gnosticism, Spiritism, Mormonism, Eddyism, Russellism, and the destructive type of Higher Criticism, practically deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, and are everywhere leavening the Church to a greater or less degree with corrupt and pernicious



doctrines; and thousands are beguiled by these various systems of error, and that to their spiritual undoing. Nearly all the more colossal systems of modern heresy have won their adherents almost wholly from among the members of orthodox churches. Why is it so? Is it not largely or chiefly due to the low state of spirituality generally prevailing in the churches? Would not pentecostal conditions, such as are described in the Second Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, have prevented such havoc from being made in the flock of God? And is not a return to Pentecost the Church's only security against such depredations in time to come?

In fact, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, sometimes called the "unction from the Holy One," "the anointing," etc., is given to the very end that believers may be safeguarded from all damaging error. "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John 2:20). "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1 John 2:27). The "unction" and "anointing" here mentioned are nothing more nor less than "the gift of the Holy Ghost," the indwelling Comforter and Sanctifier, in pentecostal effusion.

These passages must be interpreted by John 14:26: "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall *teach you all things*, and bring all things to your remembrance, *whatsoever I have said unto you.*" Here the meaning of "shall teach you all things" is limited by the expres-



sion, "whatsoever I have said unto you." Moreover, the limitation which John expresses in his Gospel is as clearly implied in the utterances from his First Epistle. Thus interpreted there is no exaggeration in what he ascribes to the "unction" or "anointing from the Holy One" teaching God's people all things.

The saying is chiefly true of believers as a whole, and yet there is a measure of this truth to which every member in the body of Christ has a birthright. "There is a Teacher in the heart who has a chair in heaven." It is His specific mission so to illuminate the minds of God's children regarding all essential truth as to secure them against the subtleties of Satan, and of all the bewitching forms of satanic error. He creates a soul-sensitiveness to the approach of error which amounts, as Dr. Joseph Parker has said, "to a well-nigh infallible instinct." If antichrist is ever refuted, it must be as a result of that Chrism from Christ which St. John calls "an unction from the Holy One," and "the anointing that abideth." Secured by this, "antichrist shall not lay his unhallowing, disanointing hand upon you. As a result of this, 'ye know all things' requisite to discriminating between essential truth and those subtle forms of error whereby Satan would lead you astray." It is by this that our Savior has provided for the highest possible security of His people as a whole, and of each individual member of the Church of God, consistent with their moral agency and with probationary life.

But this security is conditioned upon living in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, praying in the Spirit, honoring the Spirit at all times and in all ways.



Those who quench the Spirit, grieve the Spirit, resist the Spirit, vex the Spirit, by following after carnal things, by the indulgence of fleshly dispositions, by manifesting unholy tempers, words or actions, or by any kind of compromising with iniquity, can not enjoy the immunity from being corrupted, or led astray by error, of which we have been speaking. He is preëminently a HOLY Spirit; and to enjoy His ministry in the heart whatsoever is known or believed to be unholy must be put away for ever from our lives. He is also preëminently a Holy SPIRIT, and can have no affinity with that which is unspiritual; therefore whatsoever is unspiritual must be entirely abandoned, if we would have security in fellowship with Him. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8: 5, 6).

#### THE UNIFIER OF THE CHURCH

The Holy Spirit is the great Unifier of the Church. The ultimate ideal of unity to be attained by the Church is embodied in the expression, "in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God." The full realization of this ideal awaits the second coming of Christ. When He shall be manifested in glory among the children of men, and His saints shall see Him face to face, there will be a unity of *faith* and *knowledge* among His disciples which is impossible while we are compelled to "see through a glass darkly" and to "know in part" only. There is an



ideal of unity for the Church of Christ attainable here and now. It is not a unity of faith, or of knowledge, but "*the unity of the Spirit.*" "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3). This is the unity after which all Christians should earnestly strive, by seeking to cultivate fellowship for all others who are true disciples of Jesus. "The unity of the Spirit" is the unity of fellowship which is begotten of the Spirit. "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," says the beloved disciple. The Holy Spirit is continually working within believing hearts with a view to bringing them into full realization of this fellowship with the Father and the Son, and thereby into blessed and uninterrupted fellowship with each other.

Where the "fellowship of the Spirit" is realized, sectarian bigotry and prejudice will no more appear. We may not be able to see or believe alike concerning many things of minor importance; and consequently we may be connected with various church organizations, and may labor in different divisions of the army of the Lord; but we shall not allow any minor differences of this character to divide us in spirit and fellowship from any of God's dear people. We shall recognize *all* Christians as subjects of the same King, Jesus Christ; and all as enlisted in the same cause, struggling to the same end, and sustained by the same hope. Together they compose "the household of God," the ruling and unifying prin-



ciple of which is LOVE. Hearts that are "knit together" by this hallowed principle permit no denominational barriers to interfere with the flow of their mutual fellowship. Their language is,

"Let names, and sects, and parties, fall,  
And Jesus Christ be all in all."

But what shall we say as to the demand being made in many quarters for undenominational Christianity as the ideal unity to be sought for the Church? Were all religious denominations to be merged in one, would it be any better for the cause of God and humanity than it is with the Church divided into denominations as at present? Were such an ecclesiastical merger to be formed, with men having, as at present, different views on all religious and ecclesiastical subjects, how long would it be before divisions such as occurred between the Eastern and Western Churches in earlier times, and their successors at later dates, would be witnessed once more? Lamentable indeed are many of the divisions and separations which have occurred in the past, because of the lasting alienation and bitterness they have engendered. But who shall say that even these things, sad as they have been, have not been overruled for good? Who, in face of present conditions in the Roman Catholic Church and wherever it holds sway over any considerable portion of mankind, will express regret at the break which Luther and other Protestant reformers made with the Pope and his legions in the sixteenth century? Who that knows the prevailing conditions in the Anglican Church of Wesley's time can doubt that the Wesleyan reforma-



tion, and the Methodism which grew out of it, were of God, especially in view of the evangelistic influences it set in motion and their present visible results? The rise of most religious denominations has been justified and shown to be providential on a similar principle.

It is frequently urged as against efforts to promote advanced spirituality, and especially against the effort to promote the definite work of holiness, or entire sanctification, that it is productive of schism. But the fact is, that no sane effort of this kind has ever produced schism. Divisions have sometimes followed upon such efforts, but not because of any natural tendency in advanced spirituality to occasion such divisions, but either because fanatical zealots have been allowed to direct in such movements, or, because the unspiritual masses here and there have opposed such spiritual movements until they themselves have forced the separation and incurred the guilt of introducing schism into the Church of God. Usually the latter has been the case. Divisions in the Church are never directly caused by holiness, which is the work of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love and unity in human hearts; but they have been frequently due to the lack of holiness—to the opposition of carnality to spirituality. Ever and anon Cain persecutes Abel; Ishmael persecutes Isaac; he that is born of the flesh persecutes him that is born of the Spirit; and herein is the most fruitful source of all heresies, divisions and schisms in the Church.

I do not see any sufficient reason [says Dr. Dougan Clark] to accept the views of those who suppose that the Church of Christ on earth must, during the present dispensation,



become undenominational; *i. e.*, that all sects of Christians must be merged into one outward and visible Church. God's chosen people of old were twelve tribes, but one Israel. In like manner His people now are denominations, but one Church. I do not know why it should not continue to be so, until the Son of man cometh in His kingdom.

And when the Israelites marched, or when they encamped, it was not in disorder, nor at random. Every tribe had its own place assigned in the march, in the battle, and in the encampment; and every man was to march, to fight, and to pitch his tent under his own standard, and with his own tribe. There was beauty, there was order, there was strength. But the secret of it all was that God dwelt in the tabernacle, and the tabernacle was in their very midst.

And when the prophet, covetous of Balak's gold, would fain have cursed this God of Israel; when he even changed his position again and again that he might see them from a different standpoint, if peradventure he might curse them *from thence*; on every occasion the curse was changed into a blessing in his mouth, and he was compelled to exclaim, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters;" nay, even to petition for himself, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

Beautiful in their encampment, terrible in their march, irresistible in their attack upon their enemies—such were the Israelites of old when the Lord dwelt among them.

And such would the Church of Christ be now, if thoroughly baptized, and filled, and abode in by the Holy Spirit. She would indeed be "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, fair to look upon." And she would be to the enemies of God and His truth "terrible as an army with banners." And the attempts which might be made from many different standpoints to curse her would all be vain, so that even her enemies would be compelled to acknowledge with Baalam, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel." "*Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.*"



And is not the good time coming and nigh at hand? Is not the Holy Spirit indeed taking possession of the Church to a larger extent than ever before, since apostolic times? The dividing lines between different sects of Christians have hitherto been too much like high walls of separation, across which they could only shoot arrows at each other. Now they are becoming, as I trust, more like low hedges, across which they can shake hands and wish each other Godspeed on their heavenward journey.

Moreover, instead of spending their time and their talent, their brain-power and their learning, in controversies and persecutions, instead of waging angry and interminable wars with each other, they are beginning to see that it is no longer the province of Ephraim to vex Judah, nor of Judah to judge Ephraim, but Judah and Ephraim are to unite with each other, and with the other tribes, in smiting the common enemies of God and Israel; and, shoulder to shoulder with one common front, they are to wage war with Amalek, the Canaanite, or the Philistine, as the case may be.\*

#### THE CHURCH'S IMPERATIVE NEED

The great and indispensable need of the Church at the present day is a renewal of Pentecost; or, to put it better still, the great and indispensable need is such a baptism with the Holy Spirit as shall be answerable to the Scripture promise of "the latter rain in its season." The primitive Pentecost was only the "early rain" which causes the seed to germinate. The "latter rain" is that which matures the harvest. The Scriptures warrant the belief that there is an outpouring of the Spirit to come such as will have all the essential elements of that which occurred at the primitive Pentecost, but *on a vastly enlarged scale*, and with even much more glorious results.

\*"Offices of the Holy Spirit," pp. 222-224.



The mystical river which Ezekiel saw began with mere droppings from underneath the sanctuary; but, in its onward flow, it acquired increased volume and momentum, without any tributary, until at last it became a great river, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And everything lived wheresoever the waters of this river came, except the marshy or stagnant places; and even the waters of the Dead Sea were sweetened and healed. (Ezek. 47: 1-12.) Is not this typical of the law of the Spirit? Is it not a law of increasing manifestation and power? May not the Church of this latter day look for and realize such communications of the Holy Spirit as shall far exceed those of the primitive Pentecost?

“O Lord, increase our faith.” Enlarge the vision of Thy Church as to her privilege, opportunity and responsibility. Help her to arise, put on her beautiful garments, gird herself for the crisis that is before her, and go forth to the final and full accomplishment of her mission, “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”



## XXIV

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

There is no more exalted, honorable and responsible calling among men than that of the Christian minister. He is an ambassador from the King of heaven to the sons of men. (2 Cor. 5:20.) He is a watchman unto God's people. (Ezek. 3:17.) He is a husbandman, in charge of his Lord's estate. (2 Tim. 2:6.) He is a steward of the mysteries of God, and of the manifold grace of God. He is a shepherd of the flock of God which He hath purchased with His own blood. (1 Pet. 5:1-4.)

Any one of the foregoing characterizations is sufficient to impress one with the dignity and responsibility of the Christian minister's vocation. Taken together they set forth the honor and responsibility of his calling with augmented clearness and force. He who ponders the responsibilities of this calling may well exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

The only rational answer to this question is that given by the apostle, in answer to his own question: "Our sufficiency is of God." No man is called to enter this warfare at his own charges. Our Lord has provided that His ministers should be "thoroughly furnished unto every good work." He provides them with a complete panoply, and then says to them, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God,



that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:13). He has provided an enduement of power from on high, without which the most laborious efforts must spell failure, but with which success is assured, despite the opposition of earth and hell. To His primitive ministers He said, after having called them, "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Also, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:3).

#### AN INDISPENSABLE CONDITION OF SUCCESS

One can not read such passages as the foregoing without the conviction that success in the work of the Christian ministry is conditioned upon such a relation to the Holy Spirit as brings Him and His power into constant requisition in connection with such ministry. The apostolic idea of an able minister of Jesus Christ is expressed in these words: "Who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." The ministry that accomplishes the end for which the Christian ministry was ordained must ever be one that ministers or communicates the Spirit of God unto them that attend upon it. No amount of learning or culture can make one successful without the Holy Spirit. Learning is not necessarily inimical to the presence



and power of the Spirit, yet one may so depend on these things as to crowd out his sense of dependence on the Spirit, and in such a case he will be as powerless as was Samson when shorn of his locks. There may be such an over regard for precision, and such a scrupulous regard for a rigidly set order of worship, as will banish the Spirit from our worship, and leave the services cold, dry, unattractive, and ineffectual. The Spirit of God will not be restrained or confined in His operations by any set order of things arranged with a view to pleasing the ears and other senses of carnal-minded men. The successful minister of Christ must be a Spirit-called, Spirit-filled, Spirit-illumined, Spirit-guided, and Spirit-empowered man. Given these qualifications, with or without the culture of the schools, the minister of God can bid defiance to the oppositions of earth and hell, and in spite of either or both can proceed to the accomplishment of great things in the interest of God's kingdom. The more of learning the better, and the greater the increase of power, provided the learning is in no sense substituted for the Holy Spirit. But humble dependence on Him is absolutely necessary to the accomplishment of spiritual results.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S CALL

The call of the Holy Spirit is an indispensable qualification for the Christian ministry. The principle is as applicable to the Christian ministry to-day as it was in the Old Dispensation to the Levitical priesthood, that "No man taketh this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron"



(Heb. 5:4). Men have no right to take up the work of the ministry as they would a trade or a profession, for the ministry is neither a trade nor a profession, but a *calling*. He who enters the sacred office as a profession perverts the design of Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church. He may perform the duties of the office, but he will do so perfunctorily, without heart or spirit, and consequently will lamentably fail to build up believers in holiness, and to lead on the Church of God to glorious achievements.

The Church as a whole, or through its appointed representatives, may *recognize* the call of God in various persons to the ministry of the Gospel, and may publicly declare such recognition by an act of ordination, or by other simple means; but God has never delegated the work of choosing men for the ministry to any person, or to any class or company of persons in the world. He calls His own prophets; He commissions His own ambassadors; He appoints His own watchmen; He designates His own stewards. Very frequently, too, those whom He calls and appoints to these responsible positions, are such as the wise and prudent men of the world, or of the Church even, would have passed by as totally unsuited to the demand. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to



nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1: 26-29).

It was not the rulers in Israel—the rich, the wise, the mighty—that the Son of God called to be His apostles, but the humble fishermen of Galilee. And the greatest reformers, the brightest luminaries of the Church, have had a humble origin: Luther, the son of a forgerman; Melancthon, coming forth from an armorer's shop; Calvin, not the son of wealthy, though of respectable parents; Whitefield, the son of a poor innkeeper; and the Wesleys, the sons of a poor minister of the Church of England. Thus it has always been; so it is now. But the humbleness of their origin, the unpropitiousness of their circumstances, the deficiencies, in some instances, in mental culture, and the rudeness of speech of some, have been more than compensated for by this mighty endowment—the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Called of God and with this spiritual equipment they have gone forth to shake the nations, and to "turn the world upside down."

Again we insist upon it, the call must come from God. It must also come from within, by the "still small voice" which spoke to Elijah in the olden time, even the voice of the Spirit of God. No man should be admitted into the ranks of the ministry but he who is conscious of an inward, Divine call, and whose professed call is corroborated by "gifts, grace, and fruit." It is not sufficient that one is an ardent Christian; that he is a devout and spiritual man; that he is well informed in the Scriptures and concerning Divine things; or that he is capable of doing much good. These things indeed are all essential qualifications for a Christian minister, but they are also equally needed in the Christian layman; and it is not every one who possesses these characteristics that God calls to the specific work of the Christian



ministry. All are to be witnesses for Christ, and in the New Testament sense all Christians are "prophets" or preachers; but only they who have the inward, Divine call, corroborated by "gifts, grace, and fruit," should be allowed to devote themselves exclusively to this work. "No man taketh this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." The Holy Spirit must write the call indelibly upon the heart.

The man or woman who is called to the work of the Christian ministry *should in every case "be filled with the Spirit."* He should be sanctified. No one is fully equipped spiritually for this work until he or she has received the baptism with the Holy Ghost. The Christian minister should be in the full sense of the word a holy man, indwelt and filled by the Holy Spirit. He should be baptized with the Holy Ghost, in addition to having been radically converted. Otherwise carnal or fleshly traits will manifest themselves to an extent that will grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and seriously interfere with his usefulness. There is equally as great need for the ministers of Christ to-day to tarry in the expectancy of faith until they are endued with power from on high before entering upon their mission, as there was for His primitive ministers to do so. Had not our Lord's first ministers obeyed His injunction to tarry for the promised baptism, the enduement of power from on high, the Acts of the Apostles would never have been written, as there would have been little but repeated failures to record. And are there not many to-day whose ministry is a constant record of failure, simply because they are destitute of the unction and power



which the baptism with the Holy Ghost alone can impart? Are there not others who once lived under the full pressure of the holy baptism, but who have long since lost it, even as Samson lost his great strength, and who like him wist not that they have sustained this great loss? For years they have been toiling as diligently as ever, growing old under the burden and the worry of the work, and have seen practically nothing accomplished, but have constantly become more and more inefficient and unacceptable. Did they realize the situation, and would they humble themselves once more and seek anew the baptism they have lost, it would freshen, quicken, and inspire them, and give them ten to fifteen years of efficient and acceptable service yet. How great would be the gain to the Church of God if this could be brought to pass!

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ILLUMINATION

The Holy Spirit is the indispensable Agent in the spiritual illumination of ministers of the Gospel. It matters not how brilliant a man may be, how learned, how orthodox in the faith, or how expert as a defender of the same, without the Holy Spirit to quicken and illumine his spiritual understanding the whole realm of spiritual things will be dark to him. "The natural man [*ψυχικός*, "of the senses"] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). A spiritual faculty is necessary in order to discern spiritual things. The spiritual faculty in the natural



man is dormant, dead, even, until quickened by the Spirit of God. And spiritual vision, even in those who have received the preliminary quickening of the Spirit, but who are not altogether spiritual, who to a greater or less extent "walk after the flesh" and are therefore "carnal," even "babes in Christ," is not that full, clear, and discriminating vision which is needful to the work of the Christian ministry. Carnality blurs spiritual vision, and confuses spiritual understanding. "The natural man may be learned, gentle, eloquent, fascinating, but the spiritual content of Scripture is absolutely hidden from him; and the fleshly, or carnal, Christian is able to comprehend only its simplest truths, 'milk'" (1 Cor. 3:2).\*

Nothing short of the full baptism with the Holy Spirit can spiritually equip and qualify a person for preaching the Gospel of the Son of God effectively, or for skilfully performing the manifold other duties of the ministerial office. Hence the primitive disciples were bidden to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they should receive the promised baptism. They tarried. The baptism fell upon them; and they learned more regarding the Divinity of Jesus Christ and the spirituality of His mission in a single hour under that celestial baptism than they had learned during all their lives before, including their three and a half years under the tuition of Jesus Himself. The Master said it should be so. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). "He will guide you

\*Scofield Reference Bible, Note on 1 Cor. 2:14.



into all truth;" "He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (John 16:13, 14; 14:20). Would that all who are attempting to preach Christ's Gospel were living under the full spiritual illumination and revelation here promised! The ministry would then be a *living* ministry indeed, and instead of so many wretched failures on every hand as we now behold, we should see the whole land aflame with revival fires, the Lord adding to the Church daily such as should be saved. In far too many cases the ministry of to-day furnishes examples of blind men leading blind men, both of whom are falling into the ditch. It ought not to be so. It would not be so, if those who profess to be called to the Christian ministry would tarry until baptized with the Holy Ghost before entering upon their sacred work.

To have spiritual discernment we must have the Spirit. Without it we shall be like one who shoots at random. With it we can go into a strange congregation and present the truths they need to hear. We shall not want any one to tell us the spiritual condition of the people. We shall preach from inspiration, not from information. "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth" (1 Cor. 14:24, 25). Under such preaching, some of the hearers get the impression that the preacher knows all about them. The blows are not merely heavy, but well directed. "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air" (1 Cor. 9:26). But it can not be denied that many, in the pulpit, "beat the air." They aim at nothing. They repeat what they have heard from others, or have read in books. They



may be eloquent, or even instructive; but they only lull their hearers to sleep, and cheer them on in their way to hell.\*

Without the Holy Spirit ministers will lack illumination in matters spiritual; will be deficient in spiritual discernment; will be wanting in that clear discrimination and keen penetration which are so essential to the successful prosecution of their calling; and hence their ministry must be largely that of the blind trying to lead the blind, involving the peril of both falling into the ditch. "But if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). The Spirit of God is a Spirit of wisdom, specially qualifying for the ministry of the Gospel. "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth," etc. (Isa. 11:2-4). This was a prophecy concerning the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, fulfilled in Him as in no other; but the same holy Chrism which came upon Him to qualify Him for His ministry among men, is promised to all His servants, and, notwithstanding their greater limitations, it will in a goodly degree be to them a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of knowledge and might, a discriminating, guiding,

\*Roberts' "Fishers of Men," pp. 57, 58.



quickenings Spirit, enabling them to deal with all spiritual problems as they could not were He not with them.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S EMPOWERMENT

The personal reception of the Holy Spirit, as in His pentecostal effusion, is the minister's source of *empowerment* for the duties of his calling. We saw from the quotation in the last paragraph that the Spirit of God is a "Spirit of might." This was illustrated in concrete form in the ministry of Christ. He lived His immaculately sinless life, and wrought His wondrous miracles all "in the power of the Spirit." He received the Holy Spirit, at His baptism, in all the plenitude of His grace and power, and received Him as an abiding Presence, that He might communicate the same to His servants in measure suited to their capacities and needs.

This, then, is the minister's source of power for the accomplishment of his ministry—"Ye shall receive *the power of the Holy Ghost* coming upon you," as the more literal translation of the foregoing passage reads. With this endowment of "power from on high" received and retained by one whom God has called to the work of the ministry, he is bound to succeed, however hard the conditions around him, and however great his limitations respecting talent, scholarship, prestige, or other advantages of a natural character. Without this the best endeavors of the most talented, learned, eloquent, and zealous preacher must result in signal failure, so far as genuine spiritual results are concerned. A Spiritless



ministry must ever be a powerless ministry, and consequently an inefficient ministry. But the feeblest pulpit effort which ministers the Holy Spirit unto them that attend upon it will invariably be attended with success in the conversion of sinners, or in the edification of God's people, or both. An effectual ministry always ministers the Holy Spirit to them that hear.

The late Charles H. Spurgeon emphasized the need of the Holy Spirit as a source of power to make God's Word effectual for the salvation of men:

The Holy Spirit is able to make the Word as successful now as in the days of the apostles. He can bring in by hundreds and thousands as well as by ones and twos. The reason why we are not more prosperous is, that we have not the Holy Spirit with us in might and in power, as in earlier times. If we had the Spirit sealing our ministry with power, it would signify very little about our talent. Men might be poor and uneducated; their words might be broken and ungrammatical; there might not be any of the polished periods of Hall, or the glorious thunders of Chalmers; but if the might of the Spirit attended them, the humblest evangelist would be more successful than the most learned of divines or the most eloquent of preachers. It is extraordinary grace, not extraordinary talent that wins the day. It is extraordinary spiritual power, not extraordinary mental power that we need. Mental power fills a chapel, but spiritual power fills a Church. Mental power may gather a congregation; spiritual power will save souls. We want spiritual power. Oh! we know some before whom we shrink into nothing as to talent, but who have no spiritual power, and when they speak they have not the Holy Spirit with them; but we know others—simple-hearted, worthy men—who speak their country dialect, and who stand up to preach in their country place, and the Spirit of God clothes every word with power. Hearts are broken, souls are saved, and sinners are born again. Oh, Spirit of the living God! we want Thee. Thou art the life, the soul, the source of Thy



people's success. Without Thee they can do nothing; but with Thee they can do all things.\*

Men of very ordinary ability, when filled with the Spirit, are frequently used of God to accomplish great things. The Rev. James Caughey was an ordinary Methodist preacher, filling common appointments with only common success and acceptability. He received a call from God, distinct and clear, to give himself to foreign evangelistic work. He decided to comply with the call, and sought and obtained the baptism of the Holy Spirit, after which he went as a flaming fire throughout England and Ireland, preaching the Gospel of a free and full salvation, God attending his labors with the power and demonstration of the Spirit, and giving him to see tens of thousands savingly turned to the Lord, and thousands entirely sanctified.

The late Dwight L. Moody was accustomed to ascribe all the success that attended his labors as an evangelist to a baptism with the Holy Spirit which he received distinct from his conversion. Light was given him concerning this subject by two plainly dressed Christian women in Chicago. He was preaching to a full house night after night, but without visible success. After the meeting closed one night these two women came forward and shook hands with the preacher, saying, "God bless you, Brother Moody, we are praying for you." This was repeated several nights. Finally the preacher curtly said, "What are you praying for me for? Why don't you pray for these sinners? I want to get sinners converted." One of the women replied, "Oh, Brother

\*Tract.



Moody, the Lord has a baptism of the Spirit for you, and when you get that baptism you'll get the sinners." This message lingered with him, set him to studying the Bible in regard to the baptism with the Spirit, until his conviction that there was such a baptism for him finally drove him to his knees in a determination that he would not rise until he had experienced it. He has told us of how he struggled in his room in a New York hotel until, at a late hour of the night, the baptism came; and he dates the beginning of his success as an evangelist to that experience.

President Finney says:

I would repeat, with *great emphasis*, that the difference in the efficiency of ministers does not consist so much in difference of intellectual attainments as in the measure of the Holy Spirit they enjoy. And how abundantly do the facts that lie right upon the face of the Church's history demonstrate the truth of the assertion. Whatever the age or the learning of a minister may be, he is a child in spiritual knowledge, experience and qualifications for his office, without the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Until he knows what it is to "be filled with the Spirit," to be endued with power from on high, he is by no means qualified to be a leader in the Church of God. A thousand times as much stress ought to be laid upon this part of a thorough preparation for the ministry as has been. Until it is felt, acknowledged, proclaimed upon the housetops, rung through our halls of science, and sounded forth in our theological seminaries that this is altogether an indispensable part of preparation for the work of the ministry, we talk in vain and at random, when we talk of the necessity of a thorough preparation and course of training.

Dr. Horace Bushnell says:

Many a time nothing is wanted but to speak to a soul already hungry and thirsty, or, if not consciously so,



ready to hunger and thirst as soon as the bread and water of life are presented. If the problem is to get souls under sin inspired again, which it certainly is, then it is required that the preacher shall drop lecturing on religion and preach it, testify it, prophesy it, speak to faith as being in faith, bring inspiration as being inspired, and so become the vehicle, in his own person, of the power he will communicate; and that he may truly beget in the Gospel such as will be saved by it. No man is a preacher because he has something like or about a Gospel in his head. He really preaches when his person is the living embodiment, the inspired organ of the Gospel; in that manner [there is] no mere human power, but the demonstration of a Christly and Divine power; such preaching as had, in former times, effects so remarkable. At present we are almost all under the power, more or less, of the age in which we live. Infected with naturalism ourselves and having hearers that are so, we can hardly find what account to make of our barrenness.\*

He who would preach the Gospel effectively, and thereby make full proof of his ministry, must be able to preach it as did St. Paul, "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2:4). He must be able to preach as did the primitive ministers of Christ, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (1 Pet. 1:12). But no one can preach the Gospel thus unless he is "filled with the Spirit;" unless he is endued with "power from on high." Too great importance can not be attached to the idea that the minister of Jesus Christ must have the Holy Spirit as an experimental possession. "To one who labors for souls, it is as indispensable as moisture is to the farmer, or as fire is to the engineer." Without it we shall "spend our wretched strength for nought," and in the end wear out ourselves and those who attend

\*"Nature and the Supernatural," p. 516.



upon our ministry. We must keep unbroken connection with the celestial power-house, or our ministry will only end in failure.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT REGULATES ONE'S METHODS

The minister needs the Holy Spirit to regulate his methods in dealing with souls. Many who can preach well are largely failures because seriously wanting in adaptation at this point. We who are called to this responsible position have all classes of people to deal with. We can no more deal with all alike and be successful than we can raise all varieties of fruit or stock alike. We must learn how to adapt ourselves to the different circumstances, dispositions, temperaments, and idiosyncrasies of those with whom we have to deal. The indwelling presence of the Comforter will largely help us in this respect.

In the work of saving men—whether in public or in private—much depends upon the manner. In a critical disease the nurse is second only to the physician. The efficacy of the remedy depends greatly on how it is administered. So in our dealing out the truths of God. “Were I to say to this people,” said one preacher to another, “the same things you do, they would ride me out of town on a rail. Yet they take it from you without a word.” One spoke in the tenderness, and with the unction of the Holy Ghost. The other seemed to say, by his manner, “I’ll give it to you. You shall have the truth, whether you like it or not.” Of course, he only stirred up opposition.\*

Some have a cold, professional air about them in their ministry, which makes them seem unapproachable to most of the common people. Others manifest

\*“Fishers of Men,” p. 58.



a degree of affectation which savors more of merely playing a part, than it does of earnest desire to save perishing men and women from an endless hell. There is an affectation of sympathy and pathos, likewise of earnestness and zeal, and sometimes of wisdom and learning, the superficiality of which is so thin that its deceptive character is quickly detected and held in general abomination. The sheep's pelt can not hide the nature of the goat it covers. "Of all dead forms, a form of power without the power, is the most offensive. There is beauty in the motion of living beings; but there is scarcely anything more revolting than the motions of a dead body galvanized into an appearance of life." Then others are constrained and awkward in their manner. They are so wanting in freedom and naturalness of manner in the pulpit, or in society, that they can not suitably express their views and feelings. They have power, but there is a stiffness and awkwardness connected with their utterance which greatly embarrasses and hinders them. They fail to break away from self and its surroundings and assert that naturalness and freedom which are necessary in order that their utterances may be in the highest degree effective. Some are also unduly sensitive. They are easily hurt. They too readily take offense. With their sensitiveness they are also apt to become crotchety, and more or less crabbed. These are little things, it is granted, but are they not like the "dead flies" in the ointment of the apothecary, causing it "to send forth a stinking savor?" Now the experience of baptism with the Holy Ghost is needed by every minister of the Gospel to guard him against such carnal weaknesses as these,



and to enable him at all times to regulate himself and his methods of dealing with men and women with a wisdom, a freedom, a sincerity, and a power such as becomes the Gospel he is called to preach.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT INSPIRES BOLDNESS

Preachers need the Holy Spirit to give them boldness in declaring the truth. Unpopular truths must be preached at times. They must be preached in love, but with great boldness. Soon after the day of Pentecost the early preachers were forbidden by the Jewish authorities to preach any more in the name of Jesus. Being let go, they assembled together, rehearsed before the Lord the opposition with which they had met, and then prayed, saying: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word, by stretching forth Thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child Jesus." Moreover, the inspired record adds: "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:29-31). It is always so. Whenever men are filled with the Holy Ghost they will speak the Word of God with boldness. And the great need of the Church to-day is for Spirit-baptized men in all the pulpits of Christendom who shall have the courage of their convictions, and who will not shun to declare all the counsel of God, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, whether they will flatter or whether they will frown,



whether they will receive the message as from God, or whether they will regard it as the raving of a maniac who ought to be confined in a prison or asylum. Moreover, every preacher who resolves to be true to his convictions in this regard will sooner or later be put to the test. The Spirit of God alone will enable him to pass these tests without spiritual harm. Sometimes, too, for special emergencies we shall need, as did the Lord's disciples just referred to, to be *repeatedly* filled with the Holy Spirit. New emergencies require new supplies of Divine grace; and those who do not recognize this fact will be almost sure to fail.

The Spirit of God will always specially endorse and give efficacy to those phases of truth which it is His particular mission to emphasize and enforce. He is sent forth to "convict the world in respect of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Accordingly the minister who wisely preaches the truth concerning these three things, may very properly expect the Holy Spirit to give energy and effectiveness to the Word preached. Sin, righteousness, and judgment are themes which the Church must make prominent in all her efforts to evangelize the world to the end of the age. There will never come a time until the millennium dawns in which the Christian minister will be excusable for neglecting any one of the three. He who neglects these themes in favor of those that are more popular, is a traitor to his Lord, and must expect only failure and ultimate doom in consequence. Such a minister dishonors the Holy Spirit by robbing Him of His sword; and is a murderer of the souls of men by concealing from them the only



remedy that can recover them from their moral leprosy and save them from "the second death." Better were it for such men had they never been born.

Do not tone down God's awakening truth [says Dr. Daniel Steele]. Do not dilute it. Do not destroy its pungency by your modifications. Do not obscure it by your philosophy. As Ann Phillips said to her husband, "Don't shilly-shally, Wendell." Says Channing, "No man is fit to preach the truth who is not ready to be a martyr to the truth." Says the same great preacher of Christian Ethics: "One great reason for the inefficacy of the ministry is the want of faith in a higher operation of Christianity in the higher development of humanity than is now possessed. As long as the present condition of the Christian world shall be regarded as ultimate; as long as our religion shall be thought to have done already its chief work on earth; as long as the present corruptions of Church and State shall be acquiesced in as laws of nature, and shall stir up no deep agonizing desire of reform; so long the ministry will be comparatively dead." It is the power of the Gospel to transfigure human society by transforming human hearts and thus make a new heaven and a new earth, that should inspire the preacher with courage and persistent application of regenerative truth as the Holy Spirit's instrument of this new creation. The world has scarcely begun to feel the power of Christ, to save the lost, when regenerative truth shall be pungently and generally preached in reliance on the personal Holy Ghost. Do you ask, "What are regenerative truths?" We answer: The idea of a holy God, of sin, of the law, of the Atonement, of the day of judgment, of immortality, of heaven and hell determined by the human will. Set the whole firmament ablaze with the glow and heat of these eternal verities, and your preaching can not be fruitless.\*

\*"The Gospel of the Comforter," pp. 253, 254.



## XXV

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS GIFTS

"Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts for men" (Psa. 68:18).

Thus sang the royal Psalmist, in language which St. Paul interprets as prophetic of our Lord's ascension into glory, and of the "gifts of the Holy Ghost," which were to be communicated unto men as a consequence of His return to the right hand of God. See Eph. 4:8.

It was customary for ancient conquerors, in their triumphal marches, to occupy a lofty car, or chariot, to the rear of which the kings and generals captured in the battle, were chained, and from which they scattered gifts and presents among the spectators who thronged the way, that all might be partakers in the joyfulness of the occasion, and in celebrating the victory won. Even so Jesus Christ, having won the eternal conquest of sin, death, and hell, and having "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them," ascended "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;" and, as the wheels of His triumphal chariot swept through the celestial gates, and bore Him up to the Father's throne, He sent down the Holy Ghost as the Dis-



penser of Divine grace, and the Distributor of those spiritual "gifts" which would be needful to His Church in the accomplishment of its earthly mission.

#### THE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this and the following chapter to discuss the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the distribution of those spiritual "gifts" to believers, which are designed for "the edifying of the body of Christ." The apostolic doctrine concerning this subject is clearly set forth by St. Paul in First Corinthians 12:4-13, to which particular attention will now be directed:

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

#### GRACE AND GIFTS

The first thing to be especially noted here, is the fact that while grace and gifts proceed alike from the



same Divine Author, "*they spring from attributes entirely dissimilar, and depend upon conditions essentially different.*" Grace is the offspring of Divine benevolence; gifts, whether natural or spiritual, proceed from the Divine Sovereignty. To quote the words of another who has written ably on this subject: "Grace is dispensed; gifts are distributed. That is, grace is bestowed without respect of persons, equally to all; upon conditions the same to each, and possibly alike to every one. 'God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.' 'The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men.' 'The righteousness of God, which is by the faith of Jesus Christ, is manifested unto all and upon all them that believe; and there is no difference.' Gifts are conferred, not equally, nor upon certain specified conditions, but according to the will of God, corresponding with the Divine purpose concerning each individual.

"With regard to spiritual gifts it is written: 'All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.' Repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are the conditions upon which every one may obtain saving grace; but God reserves to Himself the prerogative of assigning to each his place in the body of Christ. A man can not, because he is in a state of grace, take upon him the work of the ministry. 'No man taketh this honor unto himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' No more can he become a worker of miracles, or have the gift of healing, by his own choice; for, 'Now hath God set the mem-



bers every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him.' 'To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith; to another gifts of healing; to another the working of miracles.' "

Thus God, as an independent Sovereign, acts according to His own determinate counsel, in the bestowment of spiritual gifts upon the various members of Christ's mystical body, "dividing to every man severally as He will," and assigning to each member a place in the body according "as it hath pleased Him." Gifts, therefore, are not necessarily evidences of superior grace; nor is the absence of gifts a proof that any individual is without saving grace. For "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13: 1, 2).

#### GIFTS VARIOUSLY BESTOWED

It should be observed in the second place, that while God acts sovereignly in the distribution of spiritual gifts, He also designs that, *in some measure, every member of the body of Christ should be endowed with them.* It is concerning the ministry of the Holy Ghost in the impartation of these gifts, that St. Paul affirms, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." And "the self-same Spirit distributes to every man severally as He



will." It is not as we will, but as the Holy Spirit wills, that these Divine gifts are imparted. Still they are not reserved for any particular class of individuals, since all who have saving faith in Christ are equally eligible to their bestowment. They were not limited to the apostles of our Lord, but were to attend those who should believe on Him through their word. When Jesus gave them their last great commission to "preach the Gospel to every creature," He added: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16: 17, 18).

As they were not limited to the apostles, so these gifts are not confined to the ministry, or to any particular order in the Church; but they are designed, according to St. Paul's own words, for "every man." And it has been truly said, "If the Church were not hindered by improper teaching, and by unbelief, as each member received his Pentecost, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit would also assign him his place in the body of Christ, by conferring upon him those gifts which God intended he should exercise."

But while "the manifestation of the Spirit," in the distribution of spiritual gifts, "is given to every man to profit withal," it does not follow that all the gifts belonging to the Church are to be conferred upon and exercised by any single individual, however holy he may be, or however strong his faith in God. Like natural gifts, they are to be distributed among the members "severally;" some receiving more and others



fewer; some having those of one kind, and others those of a different class. "To one is given the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge; to another the gift of prophecy," etc. But none are endowed with all these several gifts. Hence the following reasoning of St. Paul: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"

Commenting on this passage, Dr. Bowen says: "That is, He has appointed different offices in the Church, to be filled by different individuals, or classes, respectively, according to His own will; and has forbidden anyone to intrude himself into the place of another, or to be so envious of another's promotion as to insist that 'he is not of the body,' refusing to have anything to do with it, because 'he is not,' and is not acknowledged to be 'the body itself.'"

The Church is "the body of Christ." How then shall it vindicate its oneness with the Head, except it shall do the works which He did, as well as to reiterate the words which He spake? It was just as our Lord was to be received up into heaven that He made promise to His Church of the power by which that oneness with Himself should be visibly demonstrated to the world. As Elijah was caught up from the earth, and borne heavenward in a chariot of fire, his mantle fell at Elisha's feet—as his successor.



With the descent of Elijah's mantle to Elisha, came also "the double portion of Elijah's spirit," for which he had prayed. And this was demonstrated by Elisha, in the working of just double the number of miracles Elijah wrought.

"The ministration of the Spirit," to the members of Christ's mystical body, is the mantle of a greater than Elijah, even the ascended and glorified Christ, let fall upon "every man" who belongs to that "body" in order that the Church may ever be replenished with power to reproduce the marvelous works of Him who is its living Head. "The works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father" (John 14:12).

#### GIFTS ENUMERATED AND CONSIDERED

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." Nine different kinds of gifts are mentioned by the apostle, as follows:

1. The word [doctrine] of wisdom. 2. The word [doctrine] of knowledge. 3. Faith. 4. Gifts of healing. 5. The working of miracles. 6. Prophecy. 7. Discerning of spirits. 8. Divers kinds of tongues. 9. The interpretation of tongues.

"All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will."

"The word of wisdom," which stands first among the gifts of the Spirit, seems to imply a particular supernatural endowment or revelation of wisdom in spiritual things as a qualification for the preaching of the Gospel. Some light may be thrown upon it by the following words of St. Paul, as recorded in a former part of the same epistle: "Howbeit we speak



wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit*; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:6-10). Moreover, concerning this "mystery" of redemption, and concerning these "deep things of God," and "the things prepared for them that love Him," the apostle expressly affirms that mere reason can never apprehend them. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual discerneth all things, yet he himself is discerned of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that He may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (Verses 14-16, R. V.).

A special gift or enduement of wisdom was promised to the disciples, also, in times of persecution, when they should be brought before kings and governors, for the Gospel's sake. "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist" (Luke 21:14, 15).



This gift of wisdom was bestowed upon Stephen by the Holy Ghost, when he was surrounded by the Libertines, Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, who at last procured his martyrdom; "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:10).

There are "treasures of wisdom" in both the written and the Incarnate Word of God, which only that Spirit who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," can communicate to finite minds. And a special, supernatural revelation of that "wisdom of God in a mystery," is an essential qualification for the Gospel ministry. No natural gifts, no amount of scholastic culture, no human acquirements or accomplishments can make up for the lack of that interior revelation of the "manifold wisdom of God," which it is the prerogative of the Holy Ghost to impart.

"The word of knowledge" is another of those spiritual gifts enumerated by the apostle. "The word of wisdom" appears to have been a gift designed especially to qualify those who possessed it for imparting judicious counsel concerning all spiritual matters.

"The word of knowledge" had reference more particularly to that clearness of spiritual insight which is essential to aptness and correctness in expounding the Word of God and the processes of salvation. Aquila and Priscilla were endued with this, and when they had heard Apollos, who was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures," "speak boldly in the synagogue," and "teach diligently the things of the Lord," "they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."



Then Apollos, endued with a like gift, proceeded into Achaia; "who, when he had come, helped them much which had believed through grace; for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 18:24-28).

It will also be observed that, in the list we are considering, "faith" is named as one of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. It is not the grace of faith, however, of which the apostle here speaks. There is a faith by which the soul is justified and sanctified, and this may be termed a grace, rather than an extraordinary gift, of the Spirit. And then there is a faith which is a special Divine endowment—an extraordinary power of believing for the accomplishment of certain results by special Divine interposition, in the face of natural impossibilities. This is the faith that

"Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries, 'It shall be done.'"

We find it illustrated by a long array of examples in the Eleventh Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is a miracle-working faith—a faith that prevails over the elements and laws of nature by bringing Divine power to its aid; that triumphs over the physical infirmities resulting from sin; that subdues devils, and casts them out of their places of usurped authority; and that annihilates or surmounts every Red Sea barrier and every mountain-like difficulty in its way.

Fourth in the list, the apostle mentions "gifts of healing." When Christ was on earth, He went about, not only teaching men the way of life and sal-



vation, but also "healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people." His was a twofold ministry, of spiritual and physical healing. Jesus Christ is not only "Jehovah-Tsidkenu" (the Lord our Righteousness), but He is also "Jehovah-Rophi" (the Lord our Healer). To ancient Israel He said: "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am [Jehovah-Rophi] the Lord that healeth thee" (Exod. 15:26).

On condition of their unreserved obedience and diligent attention to lead holy lives, God promised, to quote Dr. Adam Clarke's comment on the foregoing passage, "that they should be kept in a state of health of body and peace of mind; and if, at any time, they should be afflicted, on application to God, the evil should be removed, because He was their Healer, or Physician."

Nor is there any evidence or authority to prove that this promise was limited to the Mosaic age; but from other Scriptures, we are warranted in the belief that the principle involved in it is of universal application.

David, in his day, regarded the Lord as the Healer of the body, as well as the Savior of the soul. In joyful celebration of His mercy as manifested in both of these respects, he sang: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases" (Psa. 103:2, 3).



Isaiah foretold the coming and the twofold ministry of Messiah, saying: "He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing," etc. (Chap. 35:4-6).

Accordingly, from the day of His baptism with water and with the Holy Ghost, until the day of His crucifixion, Christ's ministry was the twofold ministry of saving and healing. And when He commissioned His first ministers to their work, He transmitted to them authority to heal, as well as to preach, in His name. See Mark 3:15; Luke 10:8, 9; Mark 16:17, 18. Thus a twofold cord of promise runs through all those Scriptures, in both the Old and New Testaments, which set forth our Lord's redeeming work. The grace of salvation and "the gifts of healing" are the joint heritage of "the body of Christ." And we may well add: "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

"The working of miracles" is classed among the gifts of the Spirit, and is mentioned as distinct from "the gifts of healing." The word translated "miracles" is *δυνάμεις*, the plural form of a word which Green's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament defines as "a manifestation or instance of power, mighty means, omnipotence," etc. It is derived from the same root as the word dynamite, and seems to have reference to that class of mighty operations which, under special Divine direction and enduement, were manifested by some in the early Church casting out devils, in raising the dead to life, and in the per-



formance of works which required a contravention of some of the forces and laws of nature.

"The gift of prophecy" is next in order, and is considered by St. Paul as one of "the best gifts;" hence, after exhorting believers to "covet earnestly the best gifts," in the concluding verse of the Twelfth Chapter (1 Cor.), he introduces the Fourteenth with the exhortation: "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts; but rather that ye may prophesy."

Faussett, in his Bible Cyclopedia, says the root signification of prophesy, in the Hebrew, is, "to bubble forth as a fountain;" and the Greek word for prophet means, "the interpreter," from *πρὸ* and *φημί*, to "speak forth" truths for another, as Aaron was Moses' prophet, *i. e.*, spokesman. The same author also further states, that

Prediction was a leading function of the prophet, but not always attached to the prophet. For instance, the seventy elders (Num. 11:16-29); Asaph and Jeduthun, etc., "prophesied with a harp" (1 Chron. 25:3); Miriam and Deborah were "prophetesses" (Exod. 15:20; Judges 4:4, also 6:8); John the Baptist, the greatest of prophets of the Old Testament order.

To prophesy, in the general New Testament sense of the term, is to teach or expound the Scriptures, or to impart spiritual instruction, under the extraordinary power and illumination of the Holy Spirit. So St. Paul uses the term in the following passage: "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor. 14:3).

And it is in this more general sense that, under the dispensation and baptism of the Holy Ghost, as fore-



told by the prophet Joel, the "sons" and "daughters," and the "servants" and "handmaidens" in the Church of Christ are to "prophecy." This is evidently the most useful, and hence the most common, of all spiritual gifts.

Mr. Fletcher says: "On all who are renewed in love, God bestows 'the gift of prophecy.'" This may be rather too sweeping; nevertheless, the baptism of the Holy Ghost does enable whoever receives it to "magnify God with the new heart of love and the new tongue of praise." Those who were "filled with the Holy Ghost" at Pentecost, immediately began to "declare the wonderful works of God." So useful is "the gift of prophecy" for the edification of the Church, that it should be desired and sought by all believers. "Wherefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy" (1 Cor. 14:39, R. V.).

"Discerning of spirits" is also one of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost. The design of its bestowment appears to have been to enable its possessors to distinguish between true and false miracles; between false teachers, prophets, and mere pretenders to Divine inspiration, and such as are truly called by, and endued with, the Holy Ghost; and between hypocritical professors and such as have unfeigned faith in Jesus Christ. We see instances of its exercise in Peter, when Ananias and Sapphira dissembled before him (Acts 5:1-11), and when Simon Magus pretended conversion, in hope that he might be endued with these spiritual gifts which were imparted by the laying on of the apostles' hands, desiring them for the unhallowed purpose of



traffic and worldly gain (Acts 8: 9-24) ; in Paul when withstood in Paphos by Elymas the sorcerer, who sought to turn away Sergius Paulus, the deputy of the country, from hearing the truth (Acts 13: 4-12) ; and in the angel, or pastor, of the Church at Ephesus, of whom the Lord says: "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars" (Rev. 2: 2). Would that this gift were not so rare as it is among believers to-day, that the Church might be better guarded against the intrusion of uncalled and graceless men into the ranks of her ministry and other places of responsibility! "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4: 1).

Speaking with "divers kinds of tongues," and "the interpretation of tongues" complete the list of supernatural gifts enumerated by the apostles. Commentators have differed widely as to what was implied in "the gift of tongues." Perhaps there is no better rule to follow, when the "doctors disagree" on the interpretation of Scripture, than that of adopting the most simple interpretation to be found. Applying that rule in the present instance, we shall be led to conclude that the "divers kinds of tongues" refer to the ability bestowed on certain individuals by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost, to speak in languages which they had never learned, for the instruction of those who belonged to different nationalities. This seems to have been the case on the day of Pentecost, especially. Hence the astonished multitudes, representing "every nation under



heaven," exclaimed: "Are not all these which speak Galileans? and how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?" (Acts 2:7, 8.)

There were such gross perversions of this gift, at a later period, that St. Paul found it necessary to administer the reproof recorded in 1 Cor., 14th Chapter, and to speak almost disparagingly concerning it, as a means of edification in the Church. Nevertheless, he evidently exercised this gift himself at Lycaonia (Acts 14:11-15), and after writing to correct its perversion in the Corinthian church, he concludes by saying: "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues."

"Either the speaker with a tongue, or a listener," says Faussett, "might have the gift of interpreting, so he might bring forth deep truths from the seemingly incoherent utterances of foreign and Aramaic, and strange words."

We have now considered briefly the entire list of spiritual gifts as set forth in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. But, by referring to Ephesians 4:11, it will be seen that the various orders in the ministry are also considered by the apostle as gifts or appointments conferred by the extraordinary manifestations of the Holy Ghost. Having declared that when Christ "ascended on high" He "led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men," he continues: "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge



of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

To every one that savingly believes on Christ and receives his Pentecost baptism, the Holy Ghost assigns a place in that body of which Christ is the Head. The offices the different members are to fill, and the gifts they are to exercise are various, as are the numerous members of the human body. "God hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him." And the Holy Ghost distributes the various gifts among the different members "severally, as He will."

"As the members of the human body," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "so the different members of the mystical body of Christ. All are intended by Him to have the same relation to each other; to be mutually subservient to each other; to mourn and rejoice with each other." He has also made each necessary to the beauty, proportion, strength and perfection of the whole. Not one is useless; not one unnecessary. Paul, Apollos, Kephass, and their fellow-laborers, with all their variety of gifts and graces, are designed for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. (Eph. 4: 12.)

Hence no teacher should be exalted above or opposed to another. As the eye can not say to the hand, I have no need of thee, so luminous Apollos can not say to laborious Paul, I can build up and preserve the Church without thee. The foot planted on the ground to support the whole fabric, and the hands that swing at liberty, and the eye that is continually



taking in near and distant prospects, are all equally serviceable to the whole, and mutually helpful and dependent on each other. So also are the different ministers and members of the Church of Christ.

WERE THE GIFTS DESIGNED TO BE PERMANENT

The traditional answer is a decided No. From one generation to another, the statement has been handed down, through bygone centuries, that "the age of miracles passed away with apostolic times." Miraculous gifts have often been compared to the scaffolding of a building which is removed when the building is completed as to its first stage, because no longer necessary. This theory, because of its antiquity rather than because of any argument or evidence accompanying it, is, for the most part, unquestioned and unchallenged in the present age; hence the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit are generally regarded as not belonging to the Church of to-day.

A call was put forth in one of the religious journals of this country, some years ago, asking the opinion of ministers, teachers, and theological professors, concerning this matter. The call was responded to by a very large number of the various classes to whom it was addressed; and the almost unanimous verdict was, that the age of miracles passed away with the apostolic times. Several of the replies gave evidence that their authors had never investigated the subject at all. In a few instances the question at issue was evaded, unintentionally, it may be, by asking, "What is a miracle?" There were but two or three replies which expressed the belief that miracles are possible



in all ages of the Church, and that they have appeared to a greater or less extent, from the apostolic days down to the present time.

It will doubtless be regarded as presumptuous and fanatical, therefore, by many, for one to set his face squarely against the generally-received tradition that the age of miracles has passed away, and to contend for the supernatural and the miraculous as Divinely-ordained accompaniments of spiritual religion in all ages, and therefore possible at the present time. Nevertheless, at the risk of being regarded as an enthusiast or a fool, the author is constrained to declare it as his confession of faith regarding this question, that *the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, in general, were bequeathed to the whole Church, as a body, and that, too, as a perpetual inheritance.*

Instead of so much studied effort to adapt Christianity to "this present evil age" and to divest it of all that is offensive to carnal minds, "the Church in every direction needs to be reshaped to the apostolic model and reinvested with her apostolic powers. For is it not apparent that between the indignant clamor of skeptics against primitive miracles, and the stern frowning of theologians upon any alleged modern miracles, the Lord's people are in danger of being frightened out of their faith in the supernatural? \* \* \* As a religion which is ritual is sure to put vestments on her ministers sooner or later, so a religion which is rational rather than spiritual, will be certain to put vestments on the Lord's providences, insisting on their being draped in the habiliments of decent cause and effect, and attired in the surplice of natural law and order, lest God should "make bare His holy arm in the eyes of all nations."\*

Such is the growing sway of mere naturalism at the present time, that the Church, if there are any residu-

\*Dr. A. J. Gordon, in "The Ministry of Healing," p. 2.



ary legacies of supernatural power still unclaimed by her, should press boldly forward and take immediate and full possession of them, that she may be furnished with the ability to demonstrate visibly and sensibly her own Divine origin, and to convince the sensual multitudes of the existence and reality of the supernatural and the spiritual. In order to this, however, she must be brought to see and realize that the promise of her Lord ere he ascended up on high, that after His return to the Father His disciples should do the works that He had done, and even "greater works than these," was universal and unlimited, and therefore is in full force to-day for all who have faith to claim its fulfilment.

We would offer no apology for the vagaries and the fanatical ravings which have characterized some in modern times, who, separating the doctrine for which we contend from the general system of revealed truth, have proclaimed it in an unbalanced and reckless manner; nor would we intentionally do aught to open the way for the admission of such extravagance and folly in the present discussion of this subject. We are not unaware that this doctrine, like other doctrines of revealed religion, may be prostituted to the basest purposes.

The Church of Rome, though sunk in lifeless formalism and reeking in corruption, still pretends to exercise supernatural gifts, imposing upon the millions of her superstitious followers by an array of unmitigated frauds in the name of miracles. "Nor has there been wanting a John of Leyden, a Jemima Wilkinson, or a Joe Smith, to imitate her foul example." And besides these, who may be considered as the chil-



dren of antichrist and the heads of stupendous imposture, "whose hypocritical guise is too thin to mislead any but the willing victim," there are others who are sincere, pious, and full of zeal, but who are often betrayed into extravagances which reproach the cause of truth, because they are uninstructed as to the nature and design of supernatural gifts, and as to the principle and manner of their bestowment. But neither the prostitution and abuse of the doctrine by impostors, and the extravagant claims and pretensions of novices who, puffed with pride, seek to parade their faith before the public gaze, nor the fanatical errors and excesses of ignorant souls who hold the truth in an unbalanced manner, is any argument against the doctrine itself, provided it can be proved from the Scriptures. These things may beget a prejudice in some minds, which neither reason nor Scripture can overcome; but in nowise can they invalidate the doctrine itself.



## XXVI

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS GIFTS—CONTINUED

That the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were not limited to the introduction of Christianity, but were designed as the perpetual inheritance of the Church, may be shown from the following considerations:

#### PROMISES CONCERNING THEM UNLIMITED

The New Testament promises concerning them are as unlimited as are the promises of salvation by faith, with which they are often connected. Let us consider, for instance, the passage in Mark 16:15-18: "And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Nor can we, with any show of reason, limit one part of this promise to apostolic times and not circumscribe the other within the same limits. Violent attempts have been made to do this, but in vain. "He that believeth



and is baptized shall be saved." All are agreed that this promise holds good throughout the whole Christian dispensation. But, in the same breath, our Savior added: "And these signs shall follow them that believe," etc. We are compelled to conclude, therefore, that the latter promise, on the same ground as the former one, belongs to all ages and generations of the Church's history.

Practical difficulties may confront us in regard to the present fulfilment of these words, but that is not a sufficient ground on which to fix a limit to the promise where the Lord has not limited it. Scripture is not to be interpreted in conformity with the low standards of an emasculated Christianity, or of a Church on whose walls Ichabod has long been written. And if we allow "the traditions of men" or the reasonings of those who are weak in the faith, to "throw one-half of this glorious promise into eclipse, the danger is that the other half may become involved." Christians should beware of furnishing infidels with an excuse for their skepticism, by fixing limits to those Divine promises which their own faith is not strong enough to claim, when God has fixed no such limitation.

An incident occurred a few years ago, in which a shrewd skeptic made use of the text we are considering, against a person who held the common view concerning it.

Urged to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" that he might be saved, he answered, "How can I be sure that this part of the promise will be kept with me, when, as you admit, the other part is not kept with the Church to-day?" "And certainly," says the narrator, "standing on the traditional



ground, one must be dumb before such reasoning." The only safe position is to assert emphatically the perpetuity of the promise, and with the same emphasis to admit the general weakness and failure of the Church's faith in appropriating it. For who does not see that a confession of human inability is a far safer and more rational refuge for the Christian than an implication of the Divine changeableness and limitation.\*

Let us turn our attention now to a passage recorded in John 14:12-14: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it."

Here the promise of power to reproduce the miraculous works of Christ, and even "greater works than these," is connected with the general promise that God will answer prayer when offered in the name of Jesus Christ. And who shall say that the perpetuity of the former is not coëxtensive with that of the latter? Tradition and carnal reasoning may have the audacity to divorce what God has thus inseparably joined, but reverent faith in the Word of God says, "God forbid; yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4).

Dr. Adam Clarke, commenting on the words, "the works that I do shall he do also," etc., says: "An impostor might seduce the people by false miracles; but he could not make his power and cunning pass to all those who were seduced by him; but I will give you this proof of the Divinity of My mission and the

\*Dr. A. J. Gordon, in "Ministry of Healing."



truth of My doctrine." We can not understand our Lord's words otherwise than as teaching that, under the dispensation and ministry of the Holy Spirit, He would ever enable His true followers to accomplish vastly more than His own personal ministry had effected. And, so far as the work of converting and saving men is concerned, none will deny that the promise holds true to this day. On what authority, then, shall we say that it does not likewise hold true in reference to miraculous "signs," which were certainly included in the "works" to which our Lord referred?

There is another remarkable passage in the Epistle of James, to which attention is now called: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:14-16).

Here, as in many other Scriptures, the miracle of healing is spoken of as accompanying the forgiveness of sins. And let it be distinctly noted that it is the same "prayer of faith" the same "effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man" which accomplishes both results. The anointing with oil was in no sense of the word a medicinal or sanitary measure, but rather a solemn act of consecrating the afflicted person to the service of God, and a symbolic representation of the Holy Ghost, which is frequently termed "an



unction" and an "anointing." It was not the anointing with oil, but "the prayer of faith" that should heal the sick, and procure the pardon of any sins he might have committed. Nor is there the slightest intimation that either of these promises pertained only to believers who lived in the first age of Christian history. To limit that part of this Scripture which refers to supernatural healing to the apostolic age, and make that which speaks of the pardon of sin of universal application, is to do utter violence to every principle of consistent interpretation and to impose on the common sense of mankind.

Regarding the Church as "the body of Christ," and her enduement as "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all," Edward Irving held that the body ought in every age to exhibit in some degree that miraculous power which belongs to Him who is its exalted Head. He regarded the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost as "intended not only for a perpetual demonstration of Christ's power, as now living and glorified, but also as visible foretokens of His coming kingdom." Believing that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29), he regarded the cessation of miracles as a result of the Church's declension from the primitive faith, rather than as due to any revocation on the part of God.

The power of miracles must either be speedily revived in the Church [says Irving], or there will be a universal dominion of the mechanical philosophy, and faith will be fairly expelled to give place to the law of cause and effect acting and ruling in the world of mind as it doth in the world of sense.

Again he writes:

These gifts have ceased, I would say, just as the verdure



and leaves and flowers and fruits of the spring and summer and autumn cease in winter. Because by the chill and wintry blasts which have blown over the Church, her power to put forth her glorious beauty hath been prevented. But because the winter is without a green leaf or beautiful flower, do men thereof argue that there shall be flowers and fruits no more?\*

Moved intensely by such convictions as these, Irving sought by fervent prayer, powerful reasoning and earnest exhortation to awaken the Church to reclaim her lost inheritance of spiritual gifts. And his contending so earnestly for these things, as belonging to "the faith which was once delivered to the saints," brought upon him much pain and persecution, occasioned his expulsion from the Scotch Church, and caused his splendid career to suffer an eclipse. Possibly he may have erred in attaching undue importance to the "gifts," but may it not be rather that these results were inevitable, because of that grossness of mind and heart which rendered those by whom he was to be judged incapable of distinguishing between fanatical innovation and spiritual reformation? Irving suffered for the defense of these principles, but his labors and sufferings were productive of precious fruit in others, by enabling them to lay hold of God's promises regarding the gifts of the Spirit, especially the "gifts of healing," as they had never been able to do before.

#### HOW THOSE IN HEATHEN LANDS REGARD IT

When the Gospel is introduced among the heathen, who are uninstructed in the art of using the "exeget-

\*Quoted by Dr. Gordon.



ical penknife," like modern Jehoiakims, those who receive it in the simplicity of faith, in many instances, receive alike its promises of grace and its promises of spiritual gifts. Finding these promises conjoined in the New Testament, as in the instances we have been considering, they make no such effort to divorce them as do many expositors and divines in Christian lands. Consequently they are often found putting to a practical test, and that successfully, the promises concerning miraculous gifts and signs. Especially is this the case with reference to the promises of Divine healing.

Professor Christleib, a devout and eminent theologian of Bonn University, writing on the subject we are now considering says:

Our age is still characterized by the establishment of new churches. The work of missions is outwardly at least more extended than it ever was before. In this region therefore, according to our former rule, miracles should not be entirely wanting. Nor are they. We can not, therefore, fully admit the proposition that no more miracles are performed in our day. In the history of modern missions, we find many wonderful occurrences which unmistakably remind us of the apostolic age. In both periods there are similar hindrances to be overcome in the heathen world, and similar confirmations of the Word are needed to convince the dull sense of men; we may therefore expect miracles in this case.\*

In the same work, this eminent scholar and writer cites several instances of what appears to have been miraculous healing, in the genuineness of which he expresses fullest confidence. One is from the history of Hans Egede, the first Evangelical missionary to Greenland. Before he had acquired a knowledge of

\*"Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," p. 332.



their language, he had given the Esquimaux a pictorial representation of Christ working miracles. After this his hearers urged him to prove the power of this Redeemer to heal their sick people. With sighing and fervent prayer, he ventured to lay his hands upon several, and as he prayed they were made whole in the name of Jesus Christ.

Another instance is related of an earnest, native Christian at a Rhenish mission station in South Africa, in 1858, who, seeing an old friend who had been crippled in both legs, retired into the bushes to pray, after which he approached the lame man, and said, "*The same Jesus who made the lame to walk, can do so still: I say unto thee, in the name of Jesus, rise and walk.*" The lame man, at once endued with like faith, raised himself on his staff and walked, to the astonishment of all who beheld him.

A still more remarkable instance related by the Professor, is the case of Nommensen, a missionary employed by the Rhenish society, in Sumatra. The statement is given as follows:

On one occasion a heathen who had designs on his life, managed secretly to mix a deadly poison in the rice which Nommensen was preparing for his dinner. Without suspicion, the missionary ate the rice, and the heathen watched for him to fall down dead. Instead of this, however, the promise contained in Mark 16:10, was fulfilled, and he did not experience the slightest inconvenience. The heathen, by this palpable miraculous proof of the Christian God's power, became convinced of the truth, and was eventually converted; but not until his conscience had impelled him to confess his guilt to Nommensen, did the latter know from what danger he had been preserved. This incident is well attested, and the missionary still lives (1873).



A missionary who has been laboring in China for many years under the auspices of the Presbyterian Board, tells of how, with the New Testament in their possession, the native converts are continually putting into practise its promises concerning miraculous healing. From this fact he has been led to revise his own opinion on this subject, and to declare it as his belief that "the gifts of the Spirit were not taken from the Church," but that "our faith ought to exercise and claim them now."

An instance is also related and well authenticated concerning the miraculous healing of Rev. Albert Norton, in Ellichpur, India, in 1879. He was suffering from an abscess in the liver, which had worked itself through the pleura, and had commenced discharging into the right lung. His pain was almost unendurable. He suffered also from malarious remittent fever. Death seemed inevitable and near. While considering how he might die as easily as possible, he was seized with a sudden desire to live, for the sake of his family, and that he might preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. The thought flashed upon his mind, "Why can not God heal you?" At his request his wife, the only Christian within eighteen miles except an ignorant native lad, anointed him with oil in the name of the Lord, and united with him in prayer to God for his recovery. While engaged in vocal prayer, and before he felt any change in his body, the assurance was given him that their prayers were heard. His prayer was then turned to praise. The acute pain and the fever at once subsided, and neither returned again. He was able immediately to read some from the Scriptures,



and to look out a few Greek passages. He was also soon able to walk half a mile without fatigue. A detailed account of this whole matter, in his own handwriting, was sent to Dr. Stanton, of Cincinnati, formerly Moderator of the General Assembly. The account was also related by Rev. W. E. Boardman, in *The Great Physician*, and in an abridged form by Rev. A. J. Gordon, in *The Ministry of Healing*.

With such a class of Scripture promises before us as we have been considering, and with such testimonies as those just cited regarding their literal fulfilment when put to the test by those whose faith has not been corrupted by tradition and "the oppositions of science, falsely so-called," we are not ready to accept the common statement of modern theologians that "The age of miracles has passed away." We believe rather, to quote the words ascribed to Bengel, that "The reason why *many* miracles are not now wrought, is not so much because faith is established, as that *unbelief reigns*."

#### GIFTS DURING THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES

A second consideration from which we argue that the "gifts of the Holy Ghost" were designed as a permanent endowment for the Church of Christ, is the fact that *they continued in common exercise among Christians during the first three centuries, and have never wholly disappeared.*

Those who accept the tradition that miracles passed away from the Church with the apostolic age, overlook the testimony of history regarding this matter. This is an important consideration; for if it



can be shown conclusively that miraculous gifts were common during the first three centuries of the Church's history, no reason can be produced to show that the Church of the nineteenth century is not equally eligible to the same spiritual gifts. Had this stream of supernatural manifestations been suddenly arrested at the close of the apostolic period, or within a generation or two thereafter, we might, with some degree of plausibility, argue that it was designed only as confirmatory of the Christian system during the period of its introduction and establishment. But if we find that, instead of an abrupt termination at the close of the first age of Christian history, there was a continuation of miraculous manifestations throughout the second and third centuries, the question naturally arises, Why should there be any cessation of these supernatural enduements so long as the dispensation of the Spirit continues in force, and the Church's mission is unfulfilled?

We are not wanting in abundant and reliable testimony to prove that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were conferred upon and exercised by Christian believers during the first three centuries, and even into the fourth century of the Christian era.

Justin Martyr, one of the early fathers, who lived about A. D. 130, in his second Apology, Chap. VI, says:

And now you can learn from this what is under your own observation.

For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world and in your city, many of our Christian men, exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have healed, and do heal, rendering [delivering] helpless men, and driving the possessing devils out of the men,



though they could not be cured by all other exorcists and those who used incantations and drugs.

Irenæus, who lived during the same century, in his *Epistle Against Heresies*, says:

Wherefore, also, those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform [miracles], so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each has received from Him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the Church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. \* \* \* And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of gifts which the Church [scattered] throughout the whole world has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and which she exerts day by day for the benefit of the Gentiles, neither practising deception upon any, nor taking any reward from them [on account of such miraculous interpositions]. For as she has freely received from God, freely also does she minister [to others].

Origen, the date of whose published works is A. D. 230, is also quoted as saying:

Some give evidence of their having received through their faith a marvelous power, by the cures which they perform, invoking no other name over those who need their help than that of the God of all things and of Jesus, along with His history. For by these means we have seen many persons freed from grievous calamities, and from distractions of mind, and madness, and countless other ills which could be cured neither by men nor devils. (*Contra Celsum* Book III, Chap. 24.)

Mosheim, in writing of the Fourth Century, Section 23, says:



As to the miracles attributed to Anthony, Paul the Hermit, and Martin, I give them up without the least difficulty, and join with those who treat these pretended prodigies with the contempt they deserve. I am also willing to grant, that many events have been rashly deemed miraculous, which were the result of ordinary laws of nature; and also, that pious frauds were sometimes used for the purpose of giving new degrees of weight and dignity to the Christian cause. But I can not, on the other hand, assent to the opinions of those who maintain that in this century miracles had entirely ceased; and that, at this period, the Church was not favored with any extraordinary or supernatural mark of a Divine power engaged in its cause.\*

Professor Chistleib also says:

With regard to the continuance of miracles after the apostolic age, we have the testimonies, not only from Tertullian and Origen, who tell us that many in their time were convinced, against their will, of the truths of Christianity by miraculous visions, but, also, much later from Theodore of Mopsueste (429). The latter says: "Many heathen amongst us are being healed by Christians from whatever sickness they have, so abundant are miracles in our midst."†

John Wesley, in his Journal, commenting on a book he had been reading on the subject of spiritual gifts, says:

There, it is just as I had supposed; the manifestation of gifts in the Church declined as the Church declined in spirituality; and ceased with the loss of spiritual power.

The same writer in another place says:

It does not appear that these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were common in the Church for more than two or three centuries. We seldom hear of them after that fatal period when the Emperor Constantine called himself a Christian, and from a vain imagination of promoting the Chris-

\*Church History. †"Modern Doubt," etc., p. 321.



tian cause thereby, heaped riches and power and honor upon the Christians in general, but in particular upon the Christian clergy. From this time they almost ceased—very few instances of the kind were found. The cause of this was not (as has been vulgarly supposed) “because there was no more occasion for them,” because all the world was become Christians. This is a miserable mistake. Not a twentieth part of it was then nominally Christian. The real cause was the love of many, almost of all Christians, so called, was “waxed cold.” The Christians had no more of the Spirit of Christ than the other heathens. The Son of man, when He came to examine His Church, could hardly “find faith on the earth.” This was the real cause why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the Christian Church, because the Christians were turned heathens again, and had only a dead form left.\*

It is a significant fact that, according to nearly all writers on ecclesiastical history, the age of Constantine is the age from which dates the almost total decline of miracles; since that age is generally acknowledged as the age of transition from the primitive, pure and simple forms of Christianity to a degenerate, corrupt and worldly state of the Church. The decline of *faith* preceded the decline of miraculous *gifts*. The Church ceased almost wholly to depend on her glorified Lord, and rested instead on the patronage and support of earthly kings and emperors; hence those supernatural manifestations which were the “signs” and accompaniments of the primitive faith rapidly disappeared. When there was no longer a reliance on the supernatural means ordained of God for the promotion of Christianity, there were no longer supernatural and sensuous demonstrations of God’s presence and power in the midst of the Church.

\*Sermons, Vol. II., p. 266.



## GIFTS REAPPEAR DURING GREAT REVIVALS

Right here, however, another fact is suggested, which we regard as an evidence that the "gifts of the Holy Ghost" were designed as the abiding heritage of the Church. In all ages since the Church's first great declension, whenever there has been a revival of the primitive faith, and a renewal of the Church in any of its branches in the grace of the Gospel, there have also been manifested in the same degree those miraculous "signs" and extraordinary "gifts" which attended the faith of the primitive Christians: "These attended the cradle of every spiritual reformation, as they did the birth of the Church itself." The records of the Waldenses, Moravians, Huguenots, Covenanters, Quakers, Baptists, Methodists, and other Christian sects and denominations, are replete with accounts showing that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit have been perpetuated in the Church to some extent through all the declension and darkness of the bygone ages.

Nor is the manifestation of these gifts wanting in our own time, especially the "gifts of healing." During the last seventy years a revival of scriptural holiness has been in progress throughout the land; and it has been no uncommon occurrence among those who, in various places and in various churches, have received the pentecostal baptism with the Holy Ghost, to witness the exercise of spiritual "gifts" and "signs." What can we say of the faith-work of Dr. Charles Cullis, of Boston; of Rev. A. B. Simpson, of New York; of Miss Carrie F. Judd, of Buffalo, N. Y. (now Mrs. Montgomery, of San Francisco); or, if we



turn to the old world, of George Müller and his work in England; of Dorothea Trudel and her successor, Peter Zeller, in Switzerland; of Pastor Blumhardt and his ministry in the village of Mottlingen in the Black Forest of Germany, and of many other similar instances originating within the last half of the nineteenth century? What can we say but that they are the returning manifestations of those spiritual gifts with which the Church was endued in the beginning—the miraculous “signs” or tokens which God designed as a visible demonstration of His presence with His people in all ages? The unbelieving may and will endeavor to account for everything of this character on the principle of natural cause and effect; but those who are possessed of true faith recognize therein the fulfilment, in part at least, of the ascended Redeemer’s promise, “The works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father.”

## GIFTS NEEDFUL IN ALL AGES

That the gifts of the Holy Ghost were designed to be the permanent heritage of Christianity may be argued still further from the fact that *they are needful to the Church in all periods of its history.*

The Church needs the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit “to preserve in her own mind the idea of the spiritual and the supernatural.” There is, and ever has been, an unceasing tendency, even among those “who have received the knowledge of the truth” and have been made “partakers of the Holy Ghost,” to



yield to the sway of mere naturalism, and to lose the distinct idea of God's personality, and of His special supernatural providence or interposition in behalf of His people. A tendency is everywhere manifested, also, to lose the idea of Jesus Christ, as now living and glorified, and to rest on the mere historic facts pertaining to His earthly manifestation. Yielding to these tendencies the Church soon becomes cold and powerless—"having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Ceasing to depend on her living and glorified Redeemer, and to expect the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power," in confirmation of her testimony, she resorts to worldly policy and to human devices for augmenting and extending her influence. Expensive architecture, splendid decoration and ornamentation, operatic musical performances, dramatic entertainments, magnificent pomp and ceremony are the means chiefly relied on for "reaching the masses" with the Gospel of Christ. What a contrast to the apostolic manner of preaching the Gospel "in demonstration of the Spirit" until the multitudes "were pricked in their hearts" and led to cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" In this way the first great decline of power and spirituality in the Church began. In this way the signs of apostasy continued to multiply, until the Church was involved in that long and dismal night known as the Dark Ages.

Nearly all Protestant churches are now and everywhere unconsciously putting forth signs and confessions of spiritual degeneracy similar to those which betokened the beginning of the Church's first great declension from her primitive faith. The evidences



of declining faith and spirituality may be seen in the dependence which is placed on culture, music, eloquence, ritualism, architectural display, literary and social entertainments, floral decorations, bazaars, fairs, festivals, and whatever appeals to the natural tastes and sensibilities of men, as the means of attracting them to the place of worship, and procuring their aid in supporting religious enterprises. "Hear the reports that come in at any annual convention of churches, of the new organs, and frescoeings, and furnishings, and of the—not saints' festivals—but strawberry festivals, and ice-cream festivals, and flower festivals, and the large results therefrom accruing. And all this from churches that account themselves to be the body of Christ and the habitation of God through the Spirit! Is not this an infinite descent from the primitive records of power and success—the Lord 'confirming the Word *with signs following*,' and the preaching which was 'not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but *in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*?' "

These things are unmistakable signs that Protestant Christianity is rapidly losing the idea of the supernatural and the spiritual. To check this tendency, and to preserve in the members of Christ's mystical body the idea of that supernatural, spiritual, and Divine Agency on which the success of Christianity wholly depends, the visible, miraculous "demonstration of the Spirit," is greatly needed. Let the Church fully awake to a realization of her privileges in this respect; let her begin to "covet earnestly the best gifts," and in the same measure will she cease to covet worldly riches and honor, the patronage and



support of worldly rulers, and the glory and attractiveness which appeal only to the natural tastes and senses of men.

The gifts of the Spirit are needful to the Church as pledges or foretokens of "the restitution of all things" by Jesus Christ at His coming and kingdom. Miracles are declared to be "for signs." And as signs they have reference not merely to the authentication of Christianity, but they point heavenward, assuring the world that Jesus Christ, who once was crucified, is alive again and enthroned as "over all, God blessed for evermore;" and they point forward as prophetic of the Lord's return to deliver the groaning creation "into the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

Miracles are not, as some suppose, abnormal manifestations of Divine power. They are above nature, but not opposed to nature. Were they contra-natural as well as supernatural they might reasonably be expected to cease. But miracles are not infractions upon the laws of nature, as skeptics and rejectors of the supernatural allege. They are rather specimens of the health, and order, and harmony and perfection that existed in the natural creation before the disturbing and deranging presence of sin introduced disorder, disease and death; and they are samples, or first-fruits also of "Paradise regained"—of a finished redemption—of "the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21).

For surely [says Professor Chistieib] it is plainly contrary to nature that one should have eyes and not see, ears and not hear, organs of speech and not speak, and limbs



without the power to use them; but not that a Savior should come and loose his fetters. It was contrary to nature that ruthless death should sever the bands of love which God Himself has knit between mother and son, between brother and sister; but not that the young man of Nain, or Lazarus, should be released from the fetters of death through a mighty Word! And that was the climax of the unnatural that the world should nail the only righteous One to the cross; but not that the holy Bearer of that cross should conquer undeserved death, should rise and victoriously enter into His glory.\*

“The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,” are the words of an inspired apostle. And this groaning and travailing of creation is not a normal condition, but is the result of disturbance and derangement. From the beginning it was not so; nor shall it continue to be so always. But “the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. And not only so, but ourselves also which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:21, 22; R. V.). This is the glorious end to be accomplished by our Lord’s redeeming work, and toward which the faith and hope of the Church should ever be directed. In order to its accomplishment, and in order to perpetuate the faith and hope of the Church concerning it until its consummation, miraculous agency would seem to be a necessity. “As disturbance has entered the world by sin, as nature visibly attests, God must needs miraculously interfere to nullify that disturbance.”

\*“Modern Doubt,” pp. 314, 315.



Miracles are not, then, "a violation of nature's laws," as Hume alleges, but are rather effects produced by "the introduction of a new Agent." We know by experience that the free will of man can be so directed as to modify the otherwise uniform laws of nature, as in the counteracting, without destroying the inferior law of gravitation. "Infinitely more can the Divine will introduce a new element, counteracting, without destroying, lower physical law; the higher law for a time controls and suspends the action of the lower. Or, 'law' being simply the expression of God's will, in miracles God's will intervenes, for certain moral ends, to suspend His ordinary mode of working."\* And the moral ends for which miracles were wrought by Christ, and are wrought by others in His name, are to prove that He is the promised Deliverer, whose mission is to destroy the works of the devil, and to afford the Church a shadow and a foretaste of complete redemption and of millennial glory. The same need for this foreshadowing and earnest of "the restitution of all things" which existed in the beginning of the Church's history, exists to-day, and will continue to exist until the Lord Himself shall come to "create all things new."

There is also the same need of miraculous gifts in the Church now as in the beginning of her history, so far as her mission in planting Christianity in heathen lands is unfulfilled. It is said by those who contend that the age of miracles has passed away, that "miracles belong to the planting of Christianity, not to its progress and development." What is the work of the missionary, we would inquire, but that of planting

\*Faussett.



Christianity? What is the difference between St. Paul among the barbarians at Melita, and Adoniram Judson in India, or William Taylor in Africa? As Christleib says:

In both periods there are similar hindrances to be overcome in the heathen world, and similar confirmations of the Word are needed to convince the dull sense of men; we may therefore expect miracles in this case.\*

If "miracles belong to the planting of Christianity" there certainly can be no inherent probability of their entire withdrawal from the Church so long as there are new and vast fields opening in the heathen world for the introduction and establishment of the Christian religion.

\*"Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," p. 322.



## XXVII

### DISHONORING THE HOLY SPIRIT

It requires but a slight acquaintance with conditions in the religious world to-day to disclose the fact that the Holy Spirit is largely dishonored among those who regularly recite the Apostles' Creed as a part of their Sabbath worship. As there were many in Christ's time who said to Him, "Lord, Lord," but who disregarded the things which He enjoined, so there are many to-day who repeat every Lord's Day that part of the Creed which says, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," but who are not careful to honor Him, and who, because of not knowing Him, experimentally, continually do those things that dishonor Him.

Such persons have never entered into the true significance of that part of the Creed which expresses belief in the Holy Spirit; have never consciously received Him into their hearts in His witnessing, regenerating, sanctifying, and comforting Presence; are as ignorant of His manifold ministry within believers as were those whom Paul addressed at Ephesus when he inquired, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" and who answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost," or, as in the R. V., "whether the Holy Ghost was given."

Not all who are thus ignorant of the Spirit's inward working give prominence to the doctrine of the



Holy Spirit by public recitation of the Apostles' Creed, but all who profess the evangelical faith, whether extreme ritualists, moderate ritualists, or antiritualists, do profess a faith of which belief in the Holy Spirit is an essential part, and are thereby solemnly obligated to honor Him as to His exalted nature and His manifold offices. Yet there has ever been such a tendency to rest in an orthodox creed to the utter neglect of the experience it was designed to produce, that many have mistaken orthodoxy for Christianity; have rested in the form without experiencing the power; have been satisfied with the shadow without the substance; and, as a result, while nominally believing in the doctrine of the Spirit, have nevertheless been living so under the dominion of the flesh, that they could not honor Him as they should have done, but on the other hand have openly and habitually dishonored Him.

We can never honor the Holy Spirit as we should until we know Him by an experience of the heart. So long as one yields to the dominion of the flesh, living to gratify its desires, and to pamper its passions and lusts, he is serving a tyrant whose service is the worst of vassalage, and whose dictum will always lead to dishonoring the Spirit of God. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13).

#### DISHONORED BY BEING REGARDED AS IMPERSONAL

Some dishonor the Holy Spirit by treating Him and speaking concerning Him as though He were a mere



impersonal object. They regard Him as a thing, or an influence, and not as a Person. Accordingly they are accustomed to speak of the Spirit as *it*, rather than as *He*. It is evident that they think thus of Him, or they would not so speak of Him. The idea must precede the language in which it is expressed. They regard Him rather as an impersonal influence exerted by another, than as a true Person influencing men by the exercise of a true and proper personality. To many people the Holy Spirit is merely a kind of gracious heavenly influence distilled upon God's people from the celestial regions as dew or rain distils upon the grass. But we have already seen, in Chapter II of this volume, that the Scriptures represent the Holy Spirit as a Person in such an array of instances as leaves no room to doubt His true and proper personality.

But some one may ask, "Does not Romans 8:16 warrant speaking of the Spirit of God as *it*?" The passage referred to reads, in the Authorized Version, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." But the word "itself" has long been regarded as a mistranslation by critical scholars, which has been corrected, and that wisely, in the Revised Version, which makes it read, "The Spirit *Himself*," etc. The fact is that the Holy Spirit is as truly a Person as Jesus Christ is. Yet the faith of multitudes in the Spirit of God is much more vague and indefinite than their faith in Christ. Their conceptions of Him are hazy and indefinite; and the result of such conceptions is always a hazy and indefinite Christian experience. Such conceptions of the Holy Spirit invariably



weaken faith in Christ Himself, and prove a barrier to robustness of Christian character.

To regard the Spirit of God as an impersonal thing or influence is to degrade Him in our conception of Him from His true and proper personality, which "cuts away the ground for that strong faith in Him which is requisite to secure His abiding presence in us and the complete work of His offices." This is alike dishonoring to the Spirit and injurious to the soul who indulges such degrading conceptions. Whether we regard Him as a thing, or an influence, or an attribute of God, or the power of God, or the exerted energy of God, makes no difference. In any such case we degrade Him in our conceptions of Him from His exalted character, render true faith in Him as the Paraclete or indwelling Comforter impossible, shut up from ourselves the chief means of access to fellowship with God, and doom ourselves to lives of perpetual uncertainty regarding our relation to heaven and regarding the matter of personal salvation.

#### DISHONORED BY BEING REGARDED AS A CREATURE

We also dishonor the Holy Spirit if we regard Him as anything or any person less than God. The spirit of a thing is its inmost self. The spirit of a man is his inmost self. So the Spirit of God is God's inmost self—Essential Deity. It was the burden of Chapter III to demonstrate the Godhead or Deity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Scriptures seem to make this matter very clear. It has been the orthodox faith of the Church for ages. Moreover, throughout all the ages



of Christian history where this faith has been most devoutly held and most wisely preached there have been witnessed the greatest advances of the Church in spirituality, and in aggressive and successful evangelism; while, as a rule, neither spirituality nor aggressive and successful evangelism has ever attended the proclamation of the Arian and Socinian doctrine of the Holy Spirit, whether preached from Unitarian or supposedly orthodox pulpits.

*Arianism*, which derives its name from Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria in the fourth century, teaches that the Godhead consists of one eternal Person, who, in the beginning, created, in His own image, a superangelic being, His only-begotten Son, by whom He made the worlds; and that the Holy Ghost was the first and greatest creature whom the Son created. This system, therefore, while it professedly allows a kind of inferior Deity to the Son and the Spirit, denies all proper consubstantiality and coëternity with the Father, and consequently all that constitutes peculiar and supreme Divinity.\*

Though differing widely on other matters of doctrine, the Socinians hold that the Holy Spirit is a created being, the creature of a creature, the same as do the Arians for the most part. Both are chiefly represented in our day by the Unitarians. Moreover, in the form of Unitarian belief the errors of both have crept into the ministry of certain orthodox churches to an alarming extent. To entertain such views, or any views that regard the Holy Spirit as less than God, is to dishonor Him, and to rob one's self "of the ground for the strongest possible faith in the Spirit." Whenever in our teaching we place any of the processes of salvation on a

\*Field's "Handbook of Christian Theology," p. 88.



natural basis instead of claiming for them the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit, we certainly dishonor Him. Yet many who would not dare to substitute any other mediator for the Lord Jesus Christ, apparently have no hesitation in substituting various natural agencies for the indispensable and supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit of God.

## BY RELIANCE ON SUBSTITUTES

The Holy Spirit is particularly dishonored by the substitution of other things instead of His agency in much of the Church activity of the present time. In proportion as a Church loses the presence and power of the Holy Spirit other things are invariably resorted to with a view to attracting and interesting the multitudes, and raising means for the advancement of the work of the Church. Fine architecture, operatic music, decorative art, ritualism and symbolism; learned essays and popular lectures instead of apostolic preaching of the Gospel; gossiping socials, ice-cream festivals, strawberry festivals, and other festivals too numerous to mention; lawn parties, picnics, chicken dinners, oyster suppers, and clam-bake and chowder gatherings; musicales with admission fee, young people's lyceums, Browning clubs, Shakespeare clubs and other literary clubs galore; dramas, tableaux, exhibitions, drills, and games of various kinds, including in some instances games of chance; carnivals, lotteries, grab-bags, and sometimes fandangoes of which it seems almost a shame even to hint in this connection; these are some of the hundred and one things that are substituted by churches in



our day to revive and keep up interest, instead of humbling themselves before God and seeking a pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit. Not all the foregoing things are equally bad in themselves, and a few of them, apart from their abuse in the professed service of religion, are innocent enough, but it is the substitution of these things for the Holy Spirit which should be everywhere condemned. Not even the substitution of popular evangelism for the Holy Spirit can be scripturally justified. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord" (Zech. 4:6).

#### BY LIGHTLY ESTEEMING HIS AGENCY

The Holy Spirit is dishonored by placing an inferior estimate upon His agency in the work of individual salvation, and in the Church's work for advancing the kingdom of God. The Spirit is the Great Executive of the Godhead. All the concerns of man's salvation and of the kingdom of God are now under His exclusive and direct administration. This is peculiarly the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. None but He can convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He alone can so interpret the Scriptures to the minds of men as to make them spiritually luminous. Only He can regenerate the heart, accomplish the work of inward and complete sanctification, guide, develop, strengthen, comfort, and inspire believers, unify and edify the Church, "until we all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." To place an inferior estimate upon His



agency, therefore, either in the matter of personal salvation or of the Church's mission in advancing the interests of God's kingdom, is most assuredly to dishonor Him, by declining His offices and refusing His authority.

This form of dishonoring the Spirit of God is manifest at the present day by the multiplication of substitutes for His personal agency. "The Spirit is dishonored," says Dr. Steele, "when anything is substituted for His offices in the inspiration of spiritual life and the development of Christian character, such as a germ of natural goodness instead of the new birth, education instead of sanctification, culture of the æsthetic tastes instead of the fruit of the Spirit, round-about inferences that we are saved, neglecting and undervaluing the direct witness of the Spirit 'crying in the heart Abba, Father,' the pleasures of sense instead of the joy of the Holy Ghost, the honor of men rather than the approval of God."\*

#### HOW MINISTERS DISHONOR THE SPIRIT

Ministers dishonor the Holy Spirit when they depend more on the display of their gifts, talents, learning, wit, quaintness, smartness, sensationalism, or spectacular methods, than they do on His presence and power for influence with their congregations. Young ministers are particularly in danger at this point. So much of the evangelism of the time partakes largely of the foregoing characteristics that in many places the people are educated to expect such methods of pulpit work, and even the ministers them-

\*"Gospel of the Comforter," pp. 281, 282.



selves who have seen and heard such evangelistic performances very often are apt to feel that the preaching that is not characterized by these methods is dull, mere monotonous humdrum, and so are likely almost imperceptibly and unconsciously to imitate the dramatic and spectacular methods in their own pulpit services. How much better to be like St. Paul, who was able to say to the Church at Corinth, "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God!" (1 Cor. 2:1-5.) Such preaching always honors the Holy Ghost; other kinds of preaching always do Him great dishonor.

#### DISHONORED BY BEING GRIEVED

Professedly Christian people not infrequently grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and thereby He is greatly dishonored. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," is an apostolic admonition. The Holy Spirit's personal presence in the heart of the believer, and His direct, personal testimony to the individual consciousness of acceptance with God is the seal of God upon him, making him as God's property, and authenticating him as God's representative, until



Jesus comes for the final redemption of His people. But this Spirit being a Person of infinite holiness is very easily grieved by anything on the part of God's people that is inconsistent with holiness. He is an infinitely tender and sensitive Person, and when grieved by unholy words or actions, or by the manifestation of an unchristlike spirit, His testimony is partially or completely withdrawn. As Dr. Adam Clarke says,

Even those who have already a measure of the life and light of God, both of which are not only brought in by the Holy Spirit, but maintained by His constant indwelling, may give way to sin, and so grieve the Holy Spirit that it [He] shall *withdraw* both its [His] *light* and *presence*; and, in proportion as it [He] withdraws, then hardness and darkness take place; and, what is still worse, a state of *insensibility* is the consequence; for the *darkness* prevents the fallen state from being *seen*, and the hardness prevents it from being felt.\*

All unholy tempers, words, and actions; all debating the question when the Spirit makes duty known to the believer; all indifference to His promptings and solicitations to a closer walk with God, particularly to the definite quest of "holiness, without which no man can see the Lord;" all yielding to "the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" and all shrinking from the leadings of the Spirit; these are among the things whereby many grieve the Holy Spirit of God to their great spiritual loss, and sometimes to their own spiritual and eternal undoing. To grieve the Spirit in any way is necessarily to dishonor Him, and whoever does it does it at his peril.



## DISHONORED BY BEING QUENCHED

Quenching the Spirit is another way in which the Spirit is often dishonored. When St. Paul says, "Quench not the Spirit," he is addressing Christians, and represents the Spirit as a fire, because of His illuminating, penetrating, refining, and transforming character; also because of the ardor and zeal which He imparts to those in whom He dwells. But as material fire can be quenched, so can the flame which the Holy Spirit kindles in the heart and life of the believer. Fire may be quenched by withholding fuel from it. So the Spirit may be quenched by neglecting the Word of God, which is the fuel on which the fire of the Holy Spirit feeds. Many neglect their Bibles, and then expect lightning strokes from the Holy Spirit instead of a steady flame by means of fuel. Where this is the case the Spirit is soon quenched, and the holy fire ceases to burn altogether. As water will quench fire, so vain and foolish conversation, uncharitableness to others, yielding to the pressure of surrounding worldliness, conforming to the world in matters great or small, allowing ourselves to become so occupied with other matters as to neglect the means of grace, will quench the Spirit—will extinguish the flame of holy love and zeal which it is His province to bestow. Also as fire may be quenched by heaping earth upon it, even so the Holy Spirit may be quenched and His flame extinguished by becoming too zealous for the accumulation of worldly goods. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdi-



tion." The peril here pointed out is not so much that of being rich as of being determined to get rich. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," is our Lord's word of warning to us all; and one who deviates from this precept and begins a course of money-getting and money-hoarding will soon find it to work like heaping earth upon the fire—extinguishing the flame once kindled by the Spirit, and leaving him spiritually dark, and cold, and insensible. How sad it is that so many should dishonor the Holy Spirit in some or all of the foregoing ways and in other ways as well!

## DISHONORED BY BEING RESISTED

Then also the Holy Spirit is frequently dishonored by being resisted. St. Stephen, when addressing those Jews who conspired to accomplish his martyrdom, said: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." They had received circumcision in the flesh, and prided themselves in being the children of Abraham. They were the Churchmen, even the High Churchmen, of their day. But they were wicked men, nevertheless, "uncircumcised in heart and ears," and manifested it by their resistance to the Holy Ghost, and by their opposition to one who was "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and faith," carrying their opposition to the degree of stoning him to death! How blind and cruel is mere churchly zeal! What horrors upon horrors it has wrought through the ages, and that in the name of re-



ligion! How often and indescribably it has dishonored the Holy Spirit of God by resistances that seem to have partaken of the character of the unpardonable sin!

#### DISHONORED BY BEING VEXED

Of ancient Israel it is said, "But they rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit, wherefore He was turned to be their enemy." Here is another way of dishonoring the Holy Spirit, quite akin to that which has just been noticed, and yet unlike it in some particulars. Though God had wrought by many miracles and wonders for their deliverance from Egypt, and had interposed in numerous ways for their maintenance and defense in the wilderness, still upon what should have been regarded as slight provocation they "rebelled," threw off their allegiance to the Most High in their corporate capacity, and "vexed," that is, challenged, annoyed, provoked, the Spirit of God, until "He was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them." There must have been some very malignant elements in their resistance of the Holy Spirit, for nowhere else in Scripture is He represented as becoming an enemy and fighting against those who oppose and insult Him. Those who resist the Spirit are ever in danger of carrying their resistance to the point of so rebelling against Him and provoking this Messenger of Reconciliation that He will turn to be their enemy, and fight against them!



## XXVIII

### BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

#### THREE ACCOUNTS

The teachings of Christ on this awful subject are recorded by three of the evangelists, as follows:

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. (Matt. 12:31, 32.)

Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit. (Mark 3:28-30.)

And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven. (Luke 12:10.)

In these Scriptures there is a plain distinction made between blasphemy against Jesus Christ, and the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. The difference, however, is not in the nature of the blasphemy expressed in the two instances, but rather in the Objects or Persons against whom it is directed, and in the circumstances attending its manifestation.



## BLASPHEMY DEFINED

Blasphemy literally signifies defamatory or injurious speaking. It is generally restricted, in its present use, to an indignity or affront offered to the Deity, in either oral or written language. The scriptural use of the term, as may be seen from the foregoing passages, makes it consist in "speaking against" one of the sacred Persons of the Godhead.

We must not suppose, however, that every evil or profane word uttered against the Holy Spirit constitutes the sin which is unpardonable. Every such utterance is certainly presumptuous, and, if unrepented, will surely bring Divine retribution upon the transgressor. But all ordinary profanity, even though spoken against the Spirit of God, may be repented and forgiven; while the blasphemy of which our Savior speaks, is of so malignant a character as to constitute an unexpiable sin. The particular sin in question consists in such a "speaking against the Holy Ghost" as involves *a deliberate and final decision against Him*—a determined and malignant antagonism to His Person and offices.

The language and conduct of the Pharisees, to whom our Lord addressed this language, partook of this character. Their blasphemous utterances against Christ bordered so closely on the commission of the unpardonable sin, as to call forth these words of solemn and awful warning. Jesus had cast out a devil in their presence, as proof, according to their own acknowledged principles, that He was the Son of God. They were compelled to admit the miracle as *a fact*, but were determined not to admit its force



as *evidence*. Hence they ascribed the miracle, though wrought against the empire of Satan, to satanic instead of Divine influence. They exhibited their malignity toward Christ by declaring, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils."

## PREMEDITATED CRIME

This was no sudden ebullition of feeling on the part of the Pharisees. It was not uttered in a moment of excitement, but was a premeditated thing, and undertaken with the design of undermining the authority of Christ among the people. They had made up their minds deliberately to reject Him—to put Him to death. But they wanted the people with them. From the very first the masses had heard Him gladly. They had followed Him in vast throngs to the mountain, the sea-shore, and the desert; they had hung upon His lips as He uttered His loving words, and had stood in wonderment and awe in the presence of His stupendous miracles. It would seem, therefore, that the Pharisees had resolved on one of these three expedients, or upon all of them: Either they must turn the people against Him, or they must put Him to death privately, or they must so involve Him with the Roman government as to insure His death as a traitor to that government. They were now trying the first of these expedients, and hence they came out thus boldly and blasphemously.\*

It was the cool and premeditated character of their sin which evidenced its malignant spirit and called forth our Lord's solemn utterances concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost.

It was the outward act of His enemies in speaking against our Savior's miracles, which called forth His warning concerning the unpardonable sin. But we

\*Dunn's "Mission of the Spirit," p. 211.



should remember what He Himself says on this subject, in the same connection—how the things which come out of a man are evil because they are products of an evil heart, as evil fruit is the product of an evil tree. We should remember how it is said that “Jesus knowing their thoughts” addressed to them these words; thereby fixing the weight of His condemnation upon *the purpose of their hearts*, rather than upon their mere utterances. And then, after uttering His peculiar and awful condemnation on the sin against the Holy Spirit, He expressly connects the words of the mouth with the disposition of the heart, before declaring that by our words we shall be justified and by our words we shall be condemned.

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. (Matt. 12: 35-37.)

In their opposition toward Him, in their rejection of His testimony, in the blasphemous measures by which they sought to overthrow His claims to the Messiahship, in the desperate fetch made for an argument against Him by maligning and misrepresenting the very works in which they gloried, and on which they founded the credit of their own order;—by these things, did those Pharisees evince an inflexible determination against the authority of conscience—a wilful darkening of their own hearts against the light and power of evidence—an obstinate resistance to everything that would demonstrate their own



guiltiness. Underlying all this, our Lord saw that deliberate and settled purpose of rebellion, which constitutes the chief ingredient in the malignancy of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

## A SIN AGAINST CULMINATING LIGHT

The light was culminating, and the evidences were being multiplied in proof that Christ possessed a character which signalized Him above the mere children of men, and which justified Him in His claim to be the Son of God. He declares that if He had offered no other testimony than His own, they had not had sin. If He had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had still been guiltless. But now they had both seen and hated both the Son and the Father. There was but one further testimony to be given—that of the Holy Ghost—the same Spirit by whose power the miracle had just been wrought which they so blasphemously maligned. Hitherto their opposition to Jesus of Nazareth had been opposition to One whom they considered as a fellow man. But the decisive evidence of His Divinity was now being furnished them, and in their rejection of all the accumulating evidence, they smothered the instigations of conscience, and so outraged every moral impulse and sensibility within them, that their very hearts became like adamant. What formerly was no greater sin than speaking against a fellow man, now became blasphemy against the Son of God.

This, however, was a pardonable offense. One step more was required to place them beyond the reach



of mercy. They had sinned against the Father and the Son—they had now only to sin against the Holy Ghost, at His coming and manifestation as the last and greatest vindication of the Son of God, and their doom would be irrevocably fixed, their eternal damnation insured. They were already on the borders of that dispensation in which the Holy Ghost would add His testimony to all the other evidences that had been given to authenticate the commission and Person of Jesus Christ; and in which deliberate and persistent rejection of light and evidence would be a sinning against the Holy Ghost, the final result of which would be to render repentance impossible, and so to erect an impassable barrier in the way of Divine forgiveness.

The same purpose of heart which Jesus perceived to be the source of their blasphemous utterances against Himself, would, in all probability, incline them to reject the whole work and testimony of the Holy Spirit, when He should be sent into the world. This would be a culmination of wickedness which, to the men of previous ages, had not been possible; and which, in its malignity, could never be exceeded.

#### A SIN BELONGING TO THE DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT

Taking this view of our Savior's language on this important subject leads to the conclusion that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is a sin which belongs exclusively to the dispensation of the Holy Ghost; or, which it was not possible for men to commit until the Spirit of God, in His personal manifestation, and in His threefold ministry of conviction,



was given to the world. "If I depart," said Jesus, "I will send the Comforter unto you, and when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John 16:7-11). The deliberate and final rejection of the Divine Spirit in these offices of conviction, constitutes final impenitence, and erects an impassable barrier in the way of the sinner's pardon. This is "doing despite unto the Spirit of grace." This is a sin of the greatest enormity. Compared with this, the sin of the antediluvians, or of the Sodomites, or of the men of Nineveh, was venial.

In no preceding dispensation was it possible for men to manifest such a degree of malignity toward God, and of antagonism to the principle of His government, as is evinced by those who deliberately and persistently reject and despise the light and grace which are bestowed under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. For in no preceding age had God made so full a revelation of Himself and of His righteous and beneficent designs, as He has manifested under the present economy. And men are guilty before God in proportion to the light they have despised and the knowledge against which they have transgressed.

In the dispensation of the Father, only the twilight of truth had dawned upon the world. In the dispensation of the Son, the twilight had vanished, and "the *true* Light"—"the Sun of Righteousness"—had risen, dispersing His beams across the horizon of our world.



In the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, the risen "Sun of Righteousness" has reached the meridian of perfect day, and, from the zenith, pours down His full-orbed brightness upon the sons of men. They who sinned against the light of other dispensations were comparatively innocent, or excusable, since the light which shone upon them was but dim and partial. But they who sin against the light of the Holy Spirit's dispensation, sin against meridian light—despise the fullest and the last revelation of truth and grace God will ever bestow upon the race in its probationary history.

It is true that there were sins of presumption under the earlier economies, which were of a kindred nature with what is now termed the "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," and which called forth the swift judgment of the Almighty upon their perpetrators. But may we not believe that, although those presumptuous and hardened offenders were punished with physical death, Divine mercy was extended to their souls? Did not the Lord, through His servant Noah, in antediluvian times, visit "the spirits in prison" and "preach the Gospel to them that were dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit?" Compare 1 Pet. 4:5, 6, with 3:18-20. St. Paul declares, in reference to those who sinned against the light of former dispensations: "The times of this ignorance God winked at [*"overlooked,"* in the Revised Version], but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath



given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30, 31).

There can be no questioning as to the possibility of committing the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, under the present economy. We are living amid the culminating light and glory of the Spirit's dispensation. Those who sin amid that light, sin deliberately, and prove that "their heart is fully set in them to do evil." The sin of the world to-day is the sin of despising the Holy Ghost; it is a wilful, persistent rejection of the testimony He bears concerning Christ—a determined stifling of that conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment, which He works in the hearts of men. It is not only possible for men at the present day to commit that sin against the Spirit of God for which there can be no pardon, but there is great danger of their doing so. Every resistance of His gracious influences and Divine drawings, every refusal of His light, every rejection of His testimony, every wilful transgression of the Law of God which He inspired, and which He now writes upon the hearts of all who will receive His gracious ministry, is a step toward that *final* rejection of the Holy Ghost, which an infinitely compassionate God can never pardon.

#### NATURE OF THE SIN IN QUESTION MORE FULLY CONSIDERED

The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost does not consist in some isolated and independent act of transgression, nor in some awful and irrevocable deed the



nature of which is involved in obscurity, and which men whose consciences are awakened sometimes fear they have unwittingly committed. It is important that this point be clearly understood. Many an honest and bewildered inquirer has sunk into a state of melancholy bordering on despair, at the suggestion, from the adversary of souls, that the unpardonable sin has been committed; but whose fears would be quickly dissipated could he get a correct apprehension of what that sin is, and how it is generally manifested.

Nor does the sin in question consist in some atrocious deed committed under a strong and sudden impulse of temptation, and which the memory of the awakened sinner recalls from the long list of his past transgressions. For, however long and dark that catalog may be, it contains not the record of a single transgression which may not be forgiven, according to the very Scripture we are considering. "Wherefore I say unto you *all manner* of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto them."

#### A CULMINATING TRANSGRESSION

The sin which our Lord has characterized as the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, is rather the culminating act in a series of deliberate transgressions, rashly persisted in, against the light, conviction, and gracious influences of the Spirit of God. It is the final link in a long chain of malignant and rebellious acts against the Holy Spirit—the com-



pletion of that work of rejecting His light and conviction, whereby the soul binds itself in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day. The culminating act which constitutes the unpardonable sin is generally reached by "the oft-repeated answering of 'No, no, no,' to the Holy Spirit"\* in His urgent promptings and solicitations to reconciliation with God. By their long-continued rejection of His testimony, their daring and obstinate rebellion against His gracious influences, their deliberate and persistent repelling of His repeated calls to penitence, the steeling of their hearts against all His tender and beseeching entreaties; *by these acts* do men reach and pass that hidden boundary beyond which the pardoning mercy of God can never reach them. And in almost every assembly where the Gospel is preached men may be found who are thus "doing despite unto the Spirit of grace;" who are about to cross

"The hidden boundary between  
God's patience and His wrath."

By this determined rebellion the obstinate sinner is borne on, until, at last, the point is reached where conscience is stifled, and ceases to perform its functions; where the Holy Spirit, too long insulted, lays down His work of prompting that inward monitor, and leaves the wilful transgressor in a state of moral insensibility and darkness; and where, "while the compassionate voice of a beseeching God is still sounded in his ear, it is powerless to affect his calloused heart, or to penetrate the barriers which in his deliberate folly he has formed around it."†

\*Rev. A. B. Earle in "Bringing in Sheaves." †Dr. Chalmers.



## A STATE OF SIN—MORAL SUICIDE

Concerning the nature of the sin against the Holy Ghost, Dean Alford says:

The principal misunderstanding of this passage has arisen from the prejudice which possesses men's minds owing to the use of the words "the *sin* against the Holy Ghost." It is not one particular act of sin which is here condemned, but a *state* of sin, and that state a wilful and determined opposition to the present power of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Lange, in his comprehensive commentary, speaks on the same point as follows:

The Holy Spirit, who is here spoken of in distinct terms, is the last and highest manifestation of the Spirit of God, who completes and perfects the revelation of God, and in that capacity manifests Himself in the human consciousness. Blasphemously to rebel in opposition to one's better knowledge and conscience against this manifestation and influence of the Holy Spirit, is to commit moral suicide, to destroy one's religious and moral susceptibility.

## MANIFESTED BY INDIFFERENCE AND INSENSIBILITY

In view of the foregoing definitions we can readily see, that it is not in those who are distressed with an overwhelming sense of its enormity, and who sorrow on the verge of despair at thinking they may have committed it, that we are to look for the sin against the Holy Ghost. We may expect rather to find it among those busy multitudes who seem to have no thought or care in reference to their eternal destiny; who are so immersed in the secularities of life, or infatuated with the pleasures and vanities of the world, that their ears are constantly deaf to every voice that invites them to reconciliation with God. It is among



these classes that we shall find the men whose hearts seem *steeled* against every impression designed to produce repentance; whose wills are fully set in rebellion against God; and "who present an iron front of indifference and insensibility amid the appalling judgments which are ever flying about them." These are the men who "do always resist the Holy Ghost," and who, in their self-complacency and pride, "trample under foot the Son of God," and rush deliberately and swiftly on toward ruin, regardless of every warning and entreaty to turn from their downward course. Among such as these, rather than among those who stand in horror lest their iniquity should be found unpardonable, shall we find those who "have done despite unto the Spirit of grace."

Says Dr. Chalmers:

The sin against the Holy Ghost, so far from conferring any rare distinction of wickedness on him who is guilty of it, is, in fact, the sin of all who, living under the dispensation of the Gospel, have by their rejection of it, made it "the savor of death unto death." It is a sin which, if on the great day of examination you are found to be free from, will argue your acceptance of the Gospel, in virtue of which its forgiveness is made sure to you. And it is a sin which, if found to adhere to you on that day, will argue your final refusal of this same Gospel, in virtue of which your forgiveness is impossible—because you are out of the only way under heaven whereby men can be saved. So that this sin, looked upon by many as the sin of one particular age, or, if possible to realize in the present day, as only to be met with in a few solitary instances of enormous and unexpiable transgression, is the very sin upon which may be made to turn the condemnation and ruin of the existing majority of our species.\*

\*Sermon on "The Blasphemy Against the Holy Ghost."



## WHY UNPARDONABLE

The sin against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable, not because the charter of Divine mercy is insufficient in its amplitude for the remission of every sin—not because of any limitation in the Atonement made for sin—but because the only Agent of reconciliation is despised; the only ground and condition of pardon ignored; and, by his repeated acts of resistance and rejection, the sinner reaches that state of *permanent moral insensibility* which renders him utterly incapable of that repentance and faith which are the conditions of pardon and reconciliation. It is a law of nature that persistent neglect or abuse of any faculty will, sooner or later, destroy its capability for exercise. This is true of the physical and of the intellectual powers. Disuse, in respect to either of these, results in degeneration. The same is true also of the moral faculties. By the continued neglect of our moral powers, or by doing repeated violence to them, we may so benumb and harden them, we may render them so *dead*, to use a scriptural term, that repentance and faith are absolutely impossible. By the process of repeated resistance to the light and gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, every Godward aspiration of the soul is finally extinguished; every inlet that was open to heavenly influences choked and closed; and every talent for religious devotion, love, and trust, utterly destroyed.

In their hardness and impenitency, men “despise the riches of God’s goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering,” thereby “treasuring unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation



of the righteous judgment of God." And as that awful crisis is approached, in which their blasphemous rejection of the Holy Ghost will have reached its culmination, they become more and more insensible to all gracious influences, and less and less apprehensive of their impending doom.

Oh, if their rocky hearts could only feel; if their blinded eyes could only see; if the deep of their spirits could be stirred; and if repentant tears could flow; then there would be hope! But as salvation from sin is conditioned upon repentance and faith, and as these, in view of the abandoned condition of the sinner, can not be exercised, there is, consequently, no forgiveness.\*

Deliberate, malignant, and continued rejection of the blessed Holy Spirit, is the sure way to that *crisis* in which a final decision is rendered against that Messenger of reconciliation, and in the rendering of which the soul commits "the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

#### HOW THE CRISIS IS REACHED

This state is usually reached through a protracted series of resistances against the drawing and impulses of the Spirit, as we have already seen. In this persistent grieving of the Holy Comforter, the doomed man passes unconsciously or indifferently from one degree of sinfulness and impenitency to another, until that moral boundary is passed, beyond which repentance is impossible. That he is unconscious of his danger is the darkest feature of his case. Were there

\*"Mission of the Spirit," by Dunn.



distress or uneasiness there would be ground for hope. Were there a something within or about the soul that was not insensible like all the rest; were there a contending force anywhere; and, would he allow that to operate instead of doing it violence, it would gather strength continually, and wake up, one by one, each torpid and dishonored faculty, till his whole being would be quickened into strivings against self, and every avenue of his soul would be opened wide to the light and presence of God. But, alas! the apathy, the numbness of the soul, the cessation of all distress and uneasiness! What are these but symptoms that the death of the soul is already begun, and that its consummation is surely approaching?

In certain accidents the victims realize no pain. Because painless they insist that their case can not be serious; while to others it is evident that they are already dying. The surgeon at their side knows that the numbness of their frame is an infallible evidence that certain parts of the body have already lost all capacity for life.

Nor is it the least tragic accompaniment of this process that its effects *may* be concealed from others. The soul undergoing degeneration, surely by some arrangement with temptation planned in the uttermost hell, possesses the power of absolute secrecy. When all within is festering and decay and rottenness, a Judas, without anomaly, may kiss his Lord. The invisible consumption, like its fell analogue in the natural world, may even keep its victim beautiful while slaying it.\*

When such a person awakes at last to the fact that he is for ever lost, the saddest reflection will be "I am not only lost, but am self-destroyed!"

\*Prof. Drummond on "Degeneration."



## NOT EVIDENCED BY VISIBLE TOKENS

The unpardonable sin is not generally manifested in those who have committed it by such external signs as enable others to detect it with any degree of certainty. The boundary between God's mercy and His wrath is hidden from the sight of men. The tokens of perdition may be apparent in certain cases, still, no finite being can tell precisely how or when the crisis is reached by which the unpardonable sin is committed. We may be seized with trembling, and filled with awful fear, as we behold what seem to be evident tokens of final impenitence, in certain persons of our acquaintance, but we can not say with certainty that pardon and hope have forever departed from them. "God does not place the flaming seal of His condemnation upon the brow of the doomed man so visibly in this world that mortal eyes can clearly discern it." Whatever horror may be produced within us by the blasphemous words and actions of a fellow man, we have no right or authority to say of such a one, "He is committing, or is about to commit, the sin against the Holy Ghost." Our very vitals may chill with horror as we think of the fearful possibility in the case; yet we know not what expedients God has already tried, or may still try, to bring the blasphemer to repentance; therefore we can not with certainty declare his sin to be unpardonable. The jovial, witty, and refined mocker; the courteous, harmless, church-going neglecter of salvation; or the sanctimonious, but haughty, blind, and self-deceived Pharisee to be found in almost every religious assembly; may be nearer perdition's brink than the openly pro-



fane man, or the persecutor of the good. We should, therefore, be careful in the matter of judging, and content ourselves with constant and faithful warning.

Some who have gone so far in blasphemous opposition to Christianity that all hope of their recovery seemed lost, have, nevertheless, been won to the Savior, and become excellent and useful Christians. Colonel Gardiner's case is an illustration of this. And many similar ones might be given. "No one knows the number of God's appeals, a reason why we should have salutary fear for ourselves, and always hope for others."

#### THE DOOMED MAN GENERALLY UNCONSCIOUS OF HIS STATE

Nor does the sin against the Holy Ghost generally manifest itself in such a way as to render him who is guilty of it conscious of his abandoned and hopeless state. There have been instances in which persons have been conscious of resisting the last call of mercy, and of "doing despite unto the Spirit of grace." They knew the very moment when they were abandoned of the Holy Spirit. They never felt His strivings more. Nor did they fear, nor could they feel. They lived and died impenitent and hopeless. They knew their doom was sealed for years before death called them to the eternal state. In rare instances the unpardonable sin may be manifested in this way. As a general rule, however, the line of destiny is reached and crossed *unconsciously*. The man upon whose soul eternal doom is written goes smilingly,



carelessly, thoughtlessly on, and flatters himself that because he knows no fear, and realizes none of the keen anguish of conviction, he is a highly favored man. Perhaps he even deceives himself into the belief that he will finally be among the saved. But, alas! he has crossed the fatal line. The Spirit of God has left him to himself. He is securely bound over to the second death in a chain of his own forging. Abandoned of God, the ever-deepening darkness of an endless night is already gathering about his deathless soul, and devils from the grim caverns of woe are waiting to make him their prey, and to hold jubilee over his final damnation.

These things are not said to alarm those anxious, timorous souls, who, crushed under the sense and weight of their sinfulness, are betimes "the victims of threatening possessions and torturing disquietudes." The fears of such persons should be soothed rather than excited. Those who have every reason to hope, and to comfort themselves with the assurance that they may be freely and fully pardoned, are often ill at ease; while those who should be disquieted and alarmed, comfort themselves to their own danger. Those who are truly concerned and *troubled about their sinful condition*, thereby give infallible evidence that theirs is not the unpardonable sin. For an invariable manifestation or result of the sin against the Holy Ghost, is the utter absence of trouble, concern, or fear in regard to it. The very facts that a sinner is anxious about the salvation of his soul; that he is filled with fear and with trembling apprehension of a coming judgment; that he desires to know the pardoning favor of God;



that he regards a personal assurance of salvation as the most desirable object to be obtained;—these all are so many evidences that, if he will but believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, “He will abundantly pardon.”

#### THE SEAL OF DOOM SOMETIMES ALMOST VISIBLE

The ordinary way in which the sin against the Holy Ghost is manifest in those who have committed it, as we have already seen, is by apathy in reference to religious matters, indifference to the things of eternity, and the absence of all feeling, all fear, all trouble, and all anxiety in regard to the soul’s final destiny. In certain instances, however, the culminating act of rebellion against the Holy Spirit is of so malignant, blasphemous, and shocking a character, as to strike deepest terror to the hearts of the beholders, and as to leave the seal of endless doom almost visibly stamped upon the deliberate transgressor’s brow.

During an extensive revival in an American college some years ago a company of students met, and, as if led on by Satan himself, pierced veins in each other’s arms, mingled their blood, and with it signed a formal resolve that they would resist forever God’s Spirit and the religion of Christ. Their convictions ceased, though the religious interest for a time continued. Not one of the number referred to was converted. Subsequently one by one they died in despair with the gloom of future and eternal ruin hanging over them. The crime of these young men was probably blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. They sinned knowingly—despised the evidences of truth knowingly. It was malice prepense. They made their own record, took great pains to make a sure record, and in this they approached the awful point of departure.\*

\*“Credo,” p. 386.



## FINAL APPEAL

Before dismissing this subject let me earnestly and affectionately entreat you, dear hearer, if you are not at peace with God, and if you still have one faint desire to become a Christian, or feel in the slightest degree the striving of the Holy Spirit, to cherish it as you would cherish the last glimmering ray of light and hope for eternity. Grieve the Spirit of God no longer, I beseech you, lest He turn away from you to return no more. Make haste to be reconciled to God. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." To-morrow may be too late. Perhaps at this very hour the Spirit of God is holding His last interview with your soul, and urging His last entreaty to reconciliation with God. From this very hour may date the salvation or damnation of your soul. From this hour may date the beginning of repentance, or the sealing of irrevocable doom; the first step under the guidance of the Spirit, or the last in that resistance to His gracious calls and influences, which constitutes the sin against the Holy Ghost.

The Rev. A. B. Earle relates an incident of a man who entered a dark, winding cave, carrying with him a lamp and a ball of twine. That he might be able to find his way out of the cave, in case his light should go out, he secured one end of the twine outside the entrance, and then unwound the ball as he entered. In this manner he proceeded until he had gone far into the dark and winding recesses, sometimes climbing over rugged rocks, and then descending into low, damp passages. At last he entered into a large and spacious apartment, containing rare and



beautiful curiosities. Desirous of bringing from the cave some of its rich treasures, he set down his lamp, and placed the ball of twine beside it—*only for a moment!*

While breaking off a stalactite of rare and peculiar beauty, his lamp was overturned, in some way, and went out. Supposing he could easily find his lamp and the ball of twine, he commenced feeling about for it in the darkness of the cave. But his efforts were in vain. No human ear was there to hear his cries for help, as he crept about, first in one direction and then in another, in search of that thread on which his hope of life depended. Could he but grasp again that slender thread, it would lead him back to the sunlight—never before so dear.

Long, weary days and nights were spent in searching for that only means of escape—that only ray of hope; but all without avail. He was never again to behold the light of the sun, or to look upon the faces of his loved ones at home. His lifeless body was found in that dark and silent cavern a long time afterwards. What sad and bitter reflections must he have had while starving and dying in the darkness of the cave! What would he not have given, could he have grasped that thread once more in his trembling fingers? But his light once out, his fate was sealed—he must languish and die.

Even so, dear reader, the drawing of the Holy Spirit which you have so often felt, and, I trust, feel even now, is the thread on which your eternal salvation depends. When that silken thread is lost, all hope of heaven is lost. Without that heavenly Guide to lead you into light, you will be left to wander in



“the blackness of darkness forever.” Cherish, then, I entreat you, the presence and drawing of the Spirit of God; lest, too oft resisted and too long despised, He take His everlasting flight. Then will all hope of heaven be blotted out; and then to all eternity will your bitter lamentation be: “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.”







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